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# THE NEW YORKER

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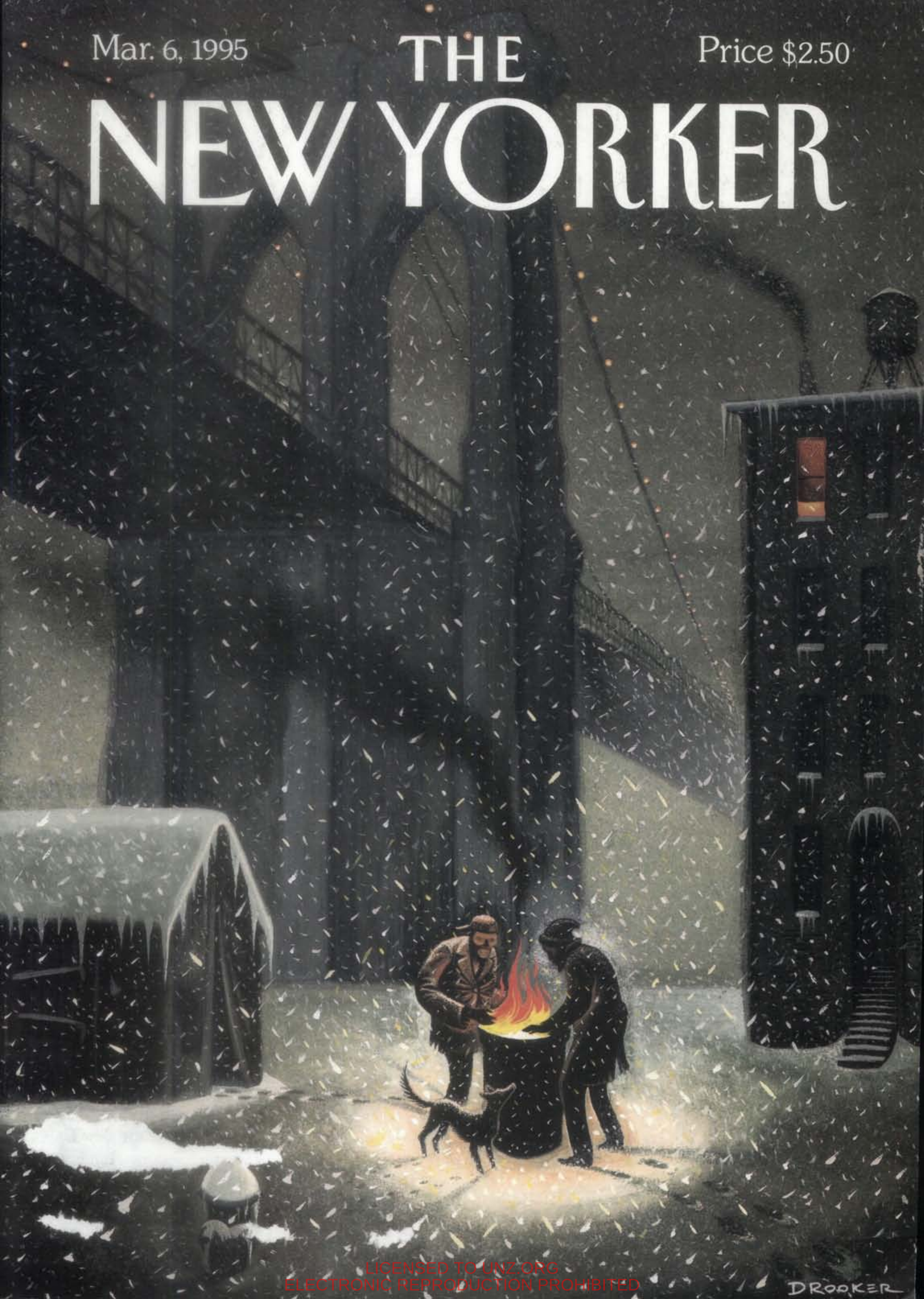

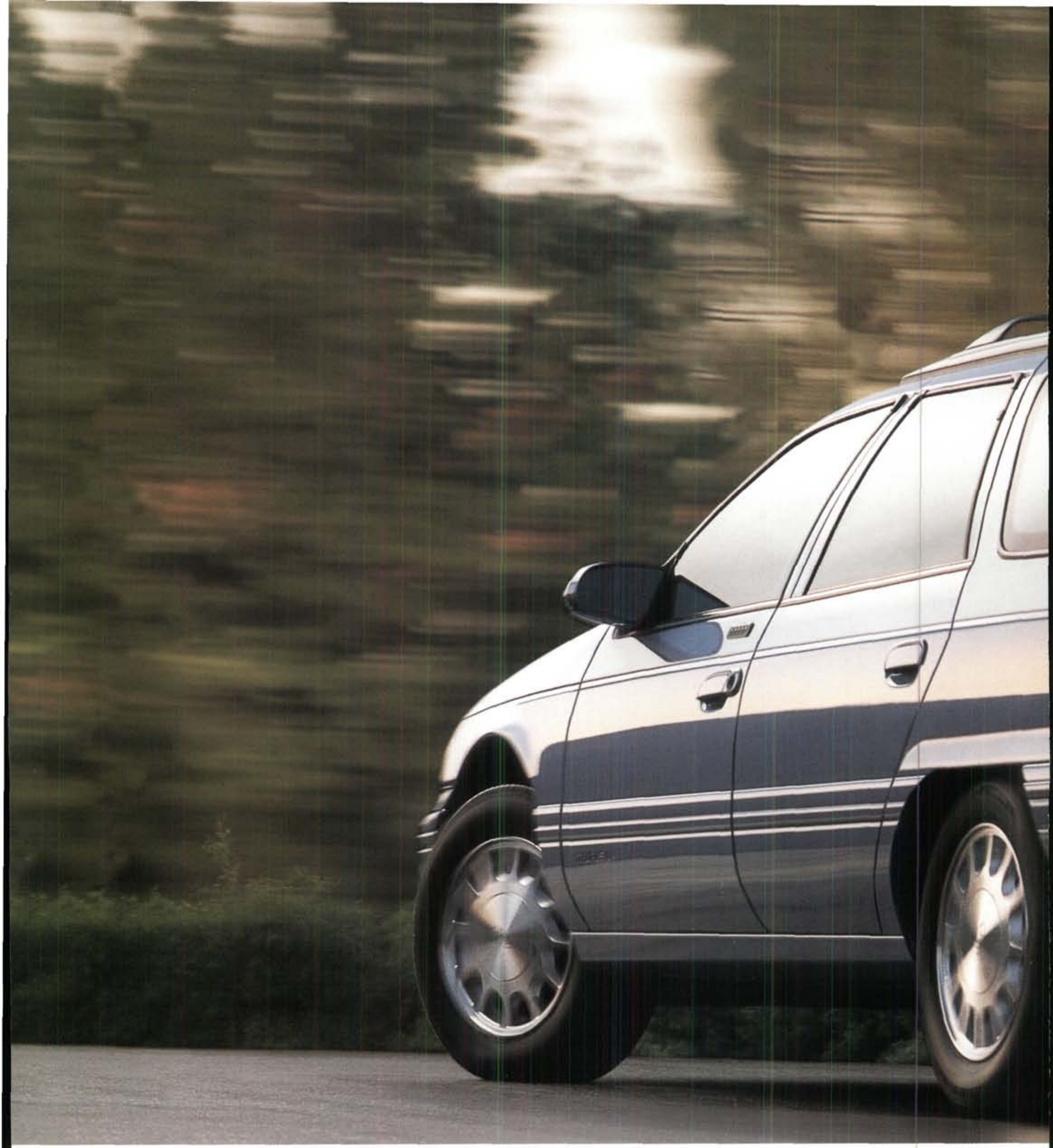

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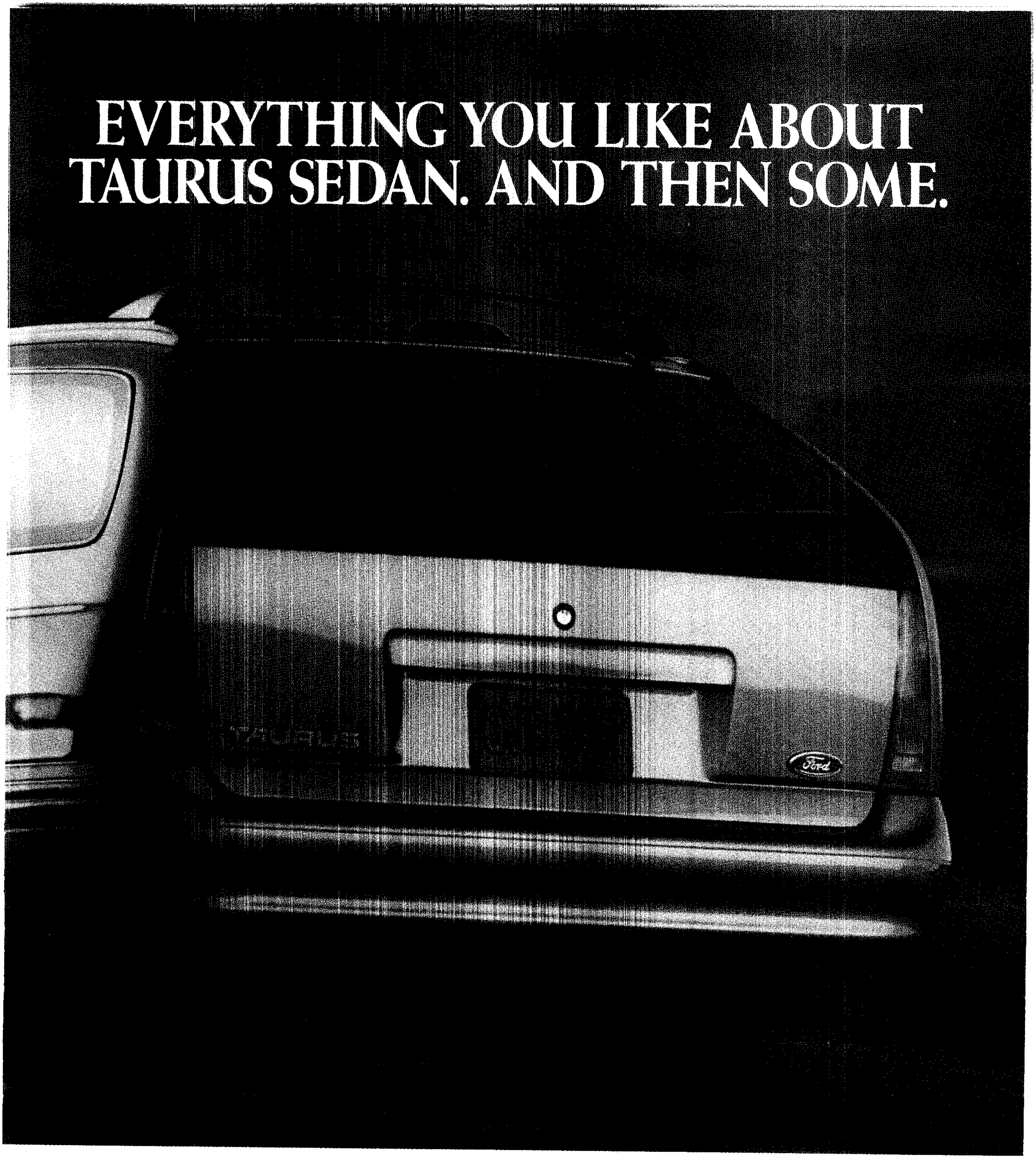

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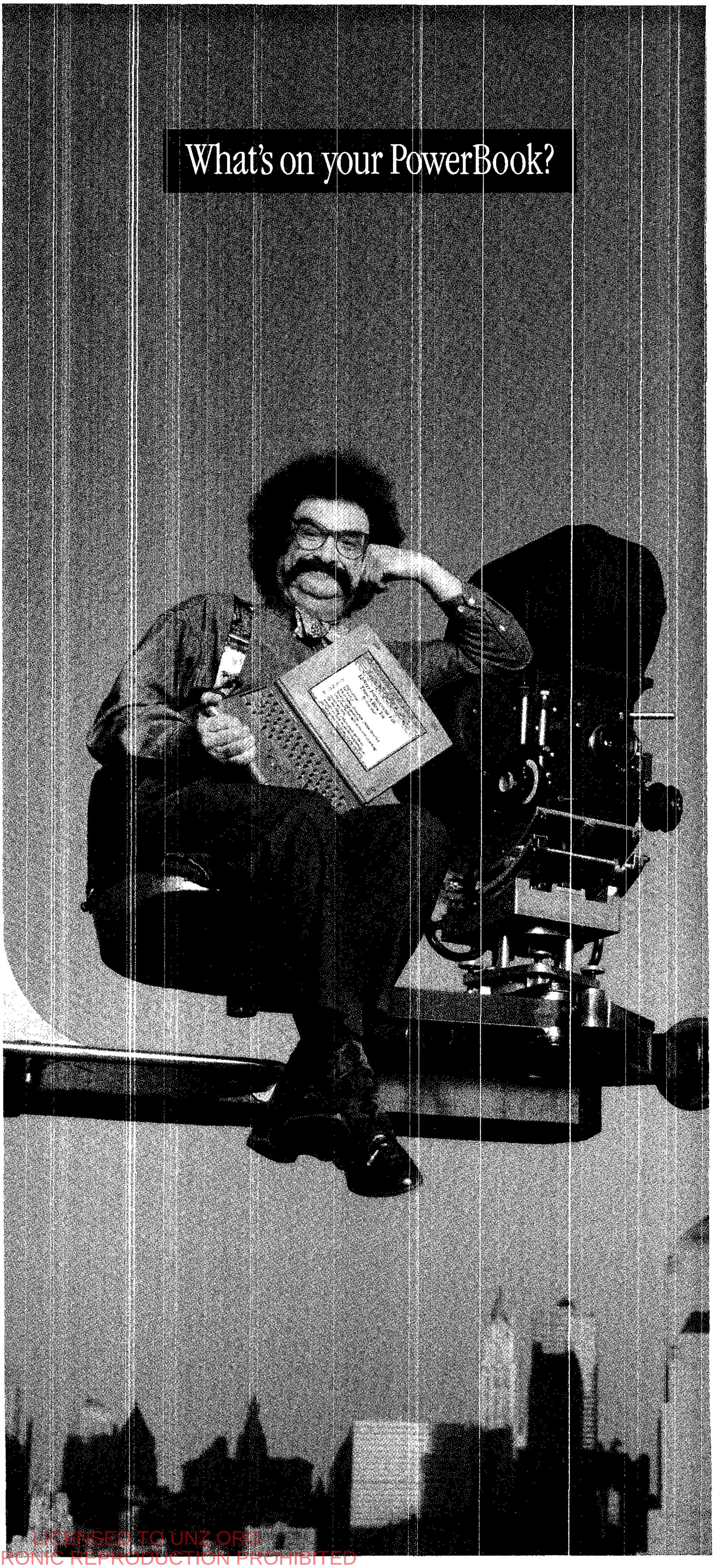
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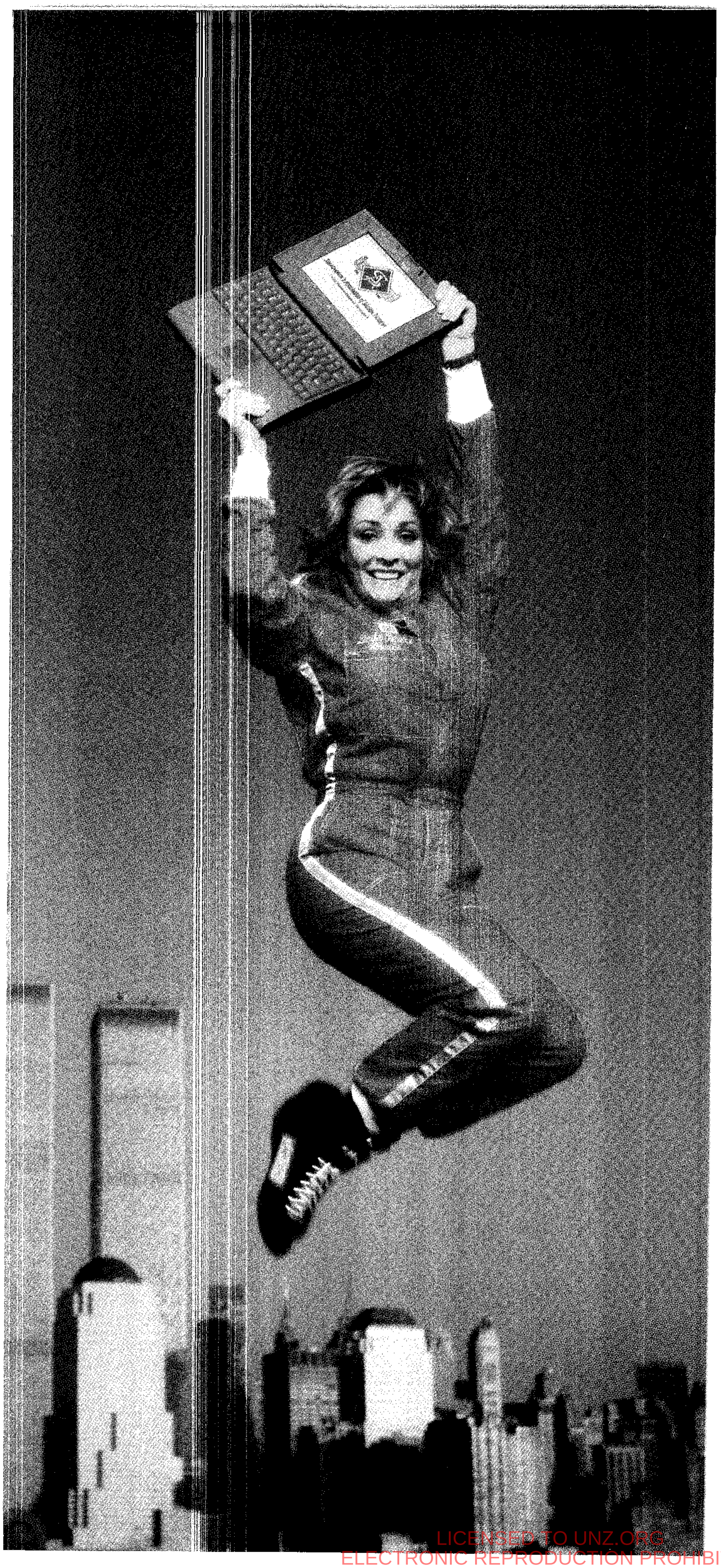

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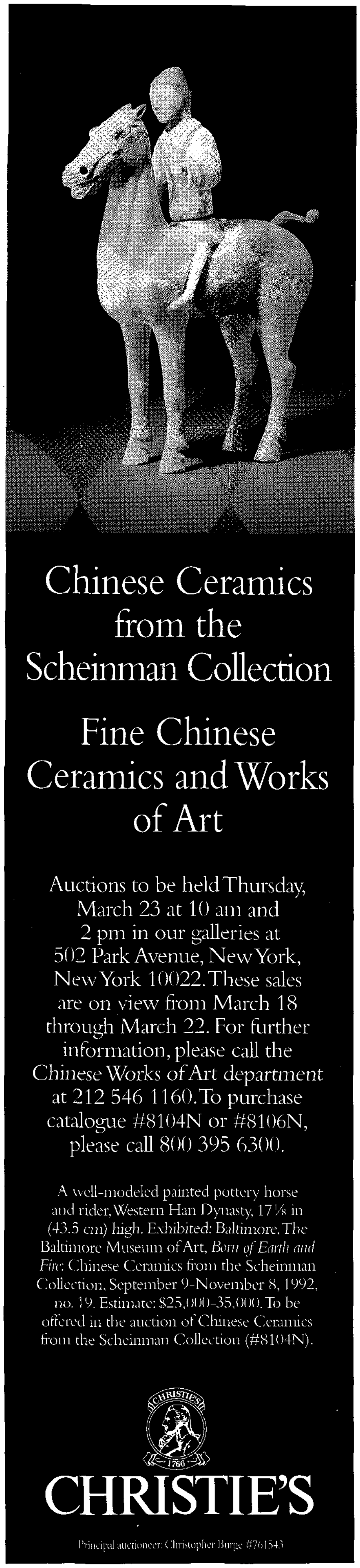

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MARCH 6, 1995

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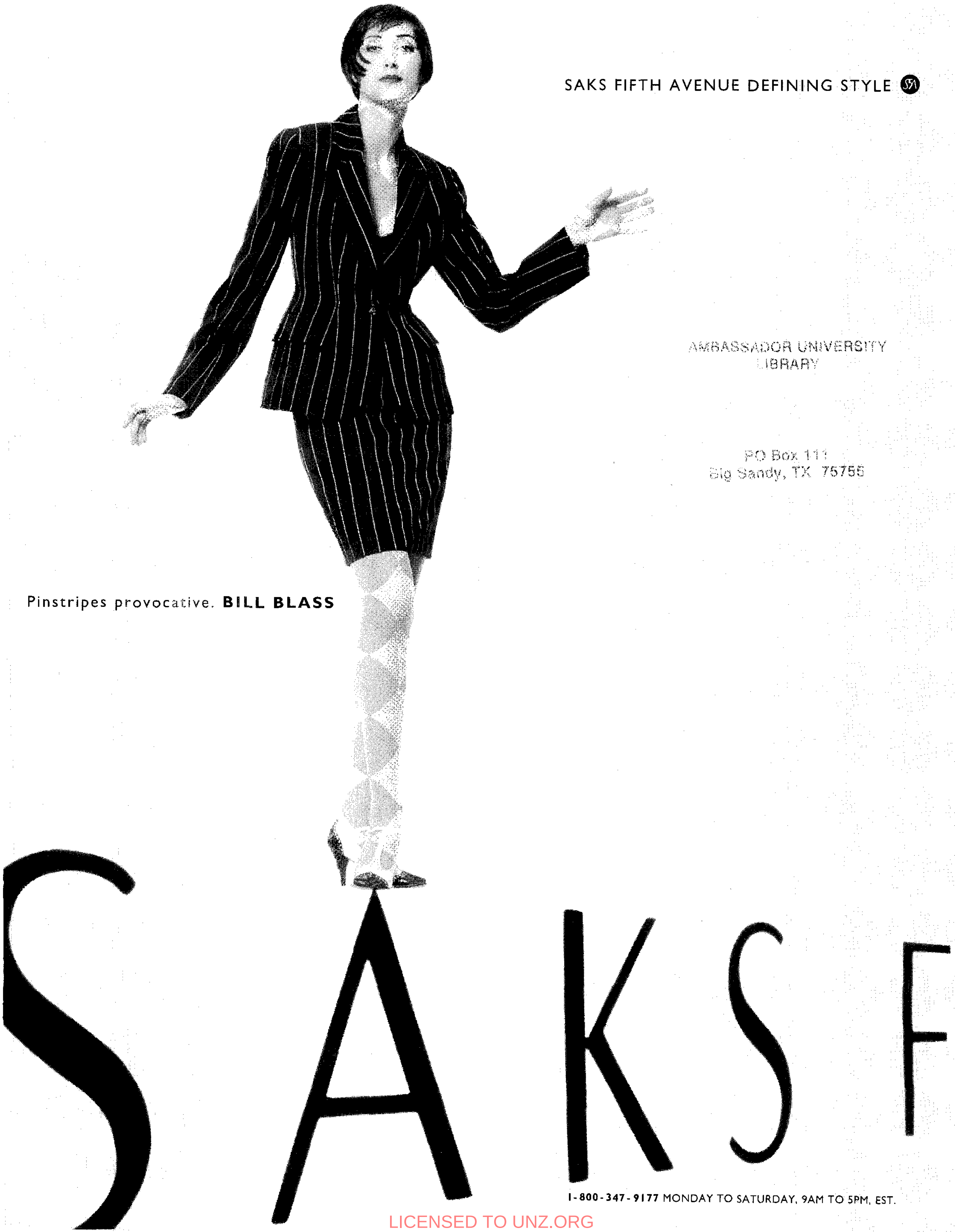

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# COMMENT

## RATS

*What's for dinner? Don't ask.*

NINETY years ago, Upton Sinclair's immensely popular documentary novel "The Jungle" exposed the conditions then prevailing in the American meat-packing industry. "Rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together," Sinclair wrote, in one of many vivid passages based on his research in Chicago, and he added, "There were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit."

Peering back in time from the moral heights of the present, we may find it hard to make out why the captains of industry circa 1905 conducted their businesses so rapaciously. Were their hearts more resistant to the promptings of conscience than those of today's corporate executives? Or did Sinclair's villains do what they did because it kept costs down and, besides, they could get away with it? Such questions are of more than just literary interest right now, for what can be got away with may be on the brink of vast expansion.

Sinclair's best-seller helped spur the passage by Congress, in 1906, of America's first great consumer-protection measures—a federal meat-inspection law and the Pure Food and Drug Act, which together prohibited the shipment of adulterated or mislabelled foods in interstate commerce. The first great political obstruction of consumer protection quickly ensued. When producers of dried fruit complained that limits on the use of sulfur as a preservative might hurt sales, President Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, backed down. "We have not learned quite enough in Washington to guide your business without destroying it," Mr. Wilson explained to them apologetically, no doubt omitting to deride the inside-the-Beltway outlook of the Department's scientists only because the Beltway had yet to be built. Pro- and anti-regulatory forces have grappled for advantage ever since. This week, the House Republicans, as part of their Contract with America, are striving to rout the rulemakers once and for all with a set of measures they imaginatively call the Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act of 1995. The legislation would erect new obstacles in the already tortuous path of risk assessment and cost-

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benefit analysis which federal agencies charged with protecting the public's health and safety must contrive to follow in order to put a regulation into effect.

One proposed requirement is merely silly. It would direct that every risk assessment include statistical estimates of "at least three other risks with which the public is familiar." Thus, if the Department of Agriculture wished to take steps to deal with what is delicately termed fecal contamination of meat, as it did the year before last, it could no longer simply cite the estimate of the Centers for Disease Control that as many as four hundred Americans are killed and twenty thousand sickened each year by *E. coli* bacteria. It would also have to point out, say, that five thousand Americans a year drown, that thirteen thousand fall to their deaths, and that fifty thousand are treated for injuries involving jewelry. In other words: Quit worrying and have another helping of *E. coli*.

A more pernicious provision would require each agency to submit its scientific and economic findings to outside panels for "peer review"—a term that poaches on the moral glamour of objective science. The panels, this provision stipulates, "shall not exclude peer reviewers merely because they represent entities that may have a potential interest in the outcome." Each agency would have to respond in writing to the peer-review comments, and each year a National Peer Review Panel would review everything all over again. It would be hard to design a more effective bureaucratic machine for paralysis by analysis. And the regulatory process is not known for breakneck speed as it is. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to take an example, issued a standard in 1971 requiring passive restraints in passenger cars as of January, 1972. After petitions for review, court challenges, and political interventions of every sort, the standard is now set to kick in with the 1998 model year.

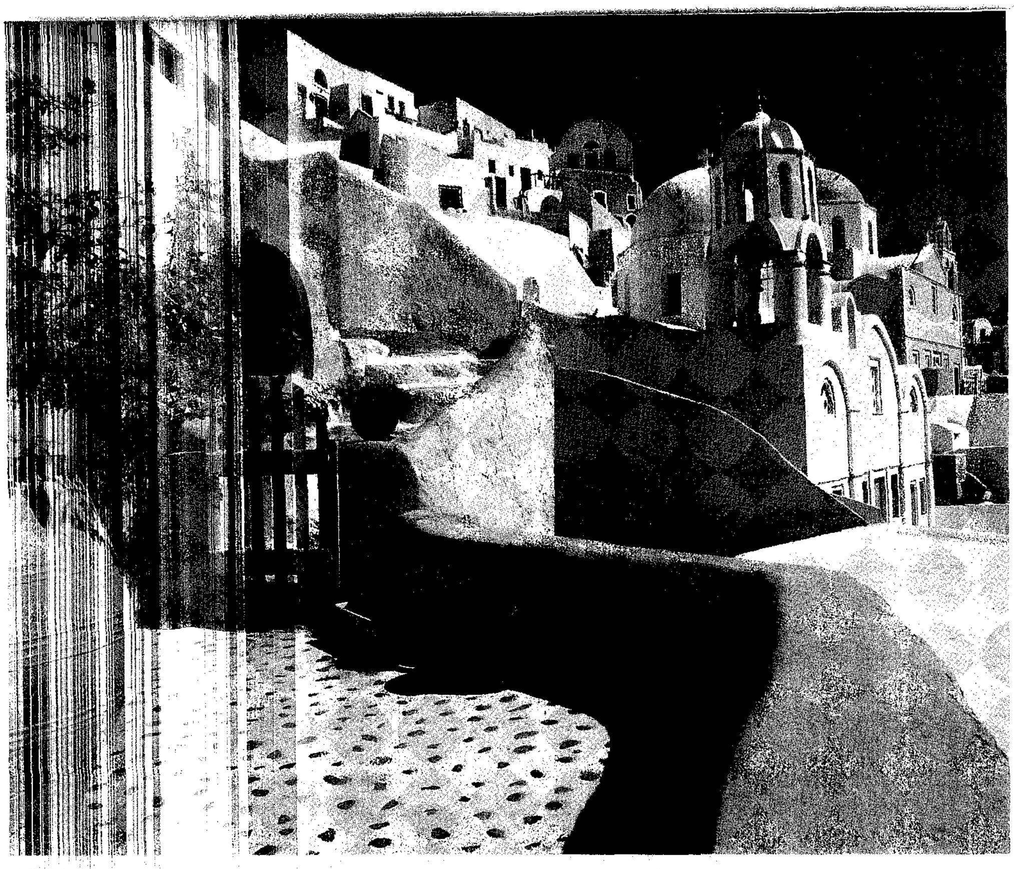
Should any rule still show signs of life after the double peer review, something called Regulatory Budget Cost Control delivers the coup de grâce. All the money that the private sector spends to comply with federal regulations is to be added up, and changes are to be initiated as necessary to keep this total "cost" at no more than five per cent of the gross domestic product. This infinitely manipulable cost figure would not be the net cost to society: it would not take into account the fact that money spent can result in money saved. Consider the center high-mounted brake lights that have been required on cars since 1985. These gadgets cost car buyers around ten dollars each, or around a hundred million dollars for the ten million new cars that may be sold in a year. Comparing the accident rates of cars with and without the lights has shown that they avert about nine hundred million dollars a year in property damage alone. What, then, is the annual "cost" of that regulation? By Republican reckoning, a hundred million dollars.

*"How about a discount for the little lady, pal, as your way of saying thanks for the bailout?"*

One needn't be a defender of pointlessly burdensome regulations to doubt the wisdom of taking a chain saw to the whole body of health and safety rules, or to wonder whether the result of doing so would be "wage enhancement." What business would choose to offset regulatory savings by handing out pay raises? The preamble to the Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act is more honest than its title about the legislation's actual purpose. The preamble sets forth, among other desiderata, strengthening "property rights" and maintaining "economic liberties." Early in this century, economic liberty—the notion that the inviolability of contracts prohibits government interference in private business activity—provided the rationale for Supreme Court decisions, since overruled, that struck down laws establishing a minimum wage and banning child labor. In the quaint argot of the period, Upton Sinclair characterized the forces rallying to the banner of economic liberty as "organized and predatory Greed."

It was to restrain those forces that the reformers of the Progressive Era fought for the Pure Food and Drug Act. The reformers understood that not all its benefits would appear on a balance sheet. The act's central achievement would be the "uplift of public morals," observed one of its leading advocates—Harvey Washington Wiley, of the Department of Agriculture. "The result of the full establishment of this law would be a notice that vested interests could no longer control legislation nor execution of laws."

In our own time (the Regressive Era?), the Contract with America envisions moral uplift of a different sort. The Contract, its authors write, "encourages and promotes the entrepreneurial spirit which has made us the most blessed nation on earth." Must we again entrust our lives and limbs to this entrepreneurial spirit, this benevolent mercantile Providence? Isn't it a jungle out there? —James S. Kunen



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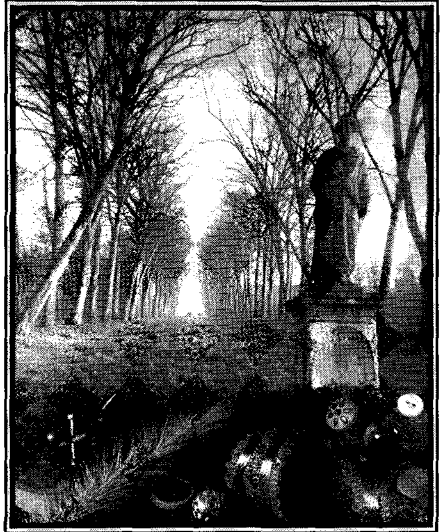

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RANDOM HOUSE

# IN THE MAIL

## IN WALKED SOROS

Quite unexpectedly, Connie Bruck's informative Profile of George Soros (January 23rd) stirred deep emotions in me, the director of a women's organization in Hungary that Mr. Soros has funded. Her account of Mr. Soros's traumatic wartime experience recalled to me a painfully similar tale told me by my mother. As a daughter of the Holocaust, I carry the imprint of the Nazis' legacy of ultimate unaccountability.

Accountability seems to be the central theme of Ms. Bruck's article, but today, in the world of unaccountability in which we in Hungary live, whether Mr. Soros—the financier turned King Midas turned philanthropist turned benevolent dictator turned unaccountable politician—was really traumatized for life by the Holocaust is beside the point. The five thousand dollars that the Open Society Institute in Budapest awarded my organization in January of 1994 was the difference between existence and nonexistence for Hungary's first and only hotline for battered women and children. And further grants from the Institute and from the Soros Foundation-Hungary have helped keep the organization functioning in a country where, as the saying goes, "money is for counting, women for beating," and where the elected, "accountable" officials of all ideological hues pay little or no heed to the needs and demands of their female electorate.

ZSUZSA BÉRES
Budapest, Hungary

Starkly implicit in Ms. Bruck's fascinating account of the swath George Soros now cuts through what were formerly the Communist states of Eastern Europe and the Russian empire is the sad failure of the industrial democracies to undertake anywhere near the effort needed to help these countries democratize and reform their economies. When the Communist regimes collapsed, Mr. Soros himself urged the industrial countries to seize that historic opportunity to shape a more peaceful world. But the industrial governments were too weak, and their fecklessness created just the kind of market lacuna that Mr. Soros has exploited and now turns into unbelievable influence in those countries. He would have been unable to amass his excessive individual power if the West had been exerting coördinated, purposeful, and properly financed leadership. It is likely that nobody regrets the failure more than Soros, for he knows that, even if reform eventually succeeds, it will cost more in suffering and turmoil, and very likely more in armaments, bloodshed, and threats to world peace, than if the industrial countries had listened to him in the first place.

CHARLES S. GARDNER
Washington, D.C.

## PITT BULL

Newt Gingrich's special affection for the English statesman William Pitt the Younger (The Talk of the Town, January 23rd) will not reassure those who already tremble for the fate of America's children under the new regime. When not occupied in staving off Napoleon, bashing unions, fighting the minimum wage, and inventing the income tax, Pitt was often intent on encouraging the practice of child labor. "Experience had already shewn," Pitt said in a speech opposing Whitbread's Minimum Wage Bill, "how much could be done by the industry of children, and the advantages of early employing them in such branches of manufactures as they are capable to execute." Pitt's aborted Poor Law reform of 1796 would have made industrial training and employment compulsory for all indigent children from the age of five. So, never mind orphanages, Newt! Let's just pack them into factories.

STEWART WEAVER
Rochester, N.Y.

In The Talk of the Town, it is noted that Pitt the Younger was "a drunk, a debtor . . . and probably gay." Nice categorization. Let's see. A thief, a liar, and probably tall? A murderer, an arsonist, and probably vegetarian? A rapist, a swindler, and probably right-handed?

JOHN JEROME
Ashfield, Mass.

### LAPTOP LARGESSE

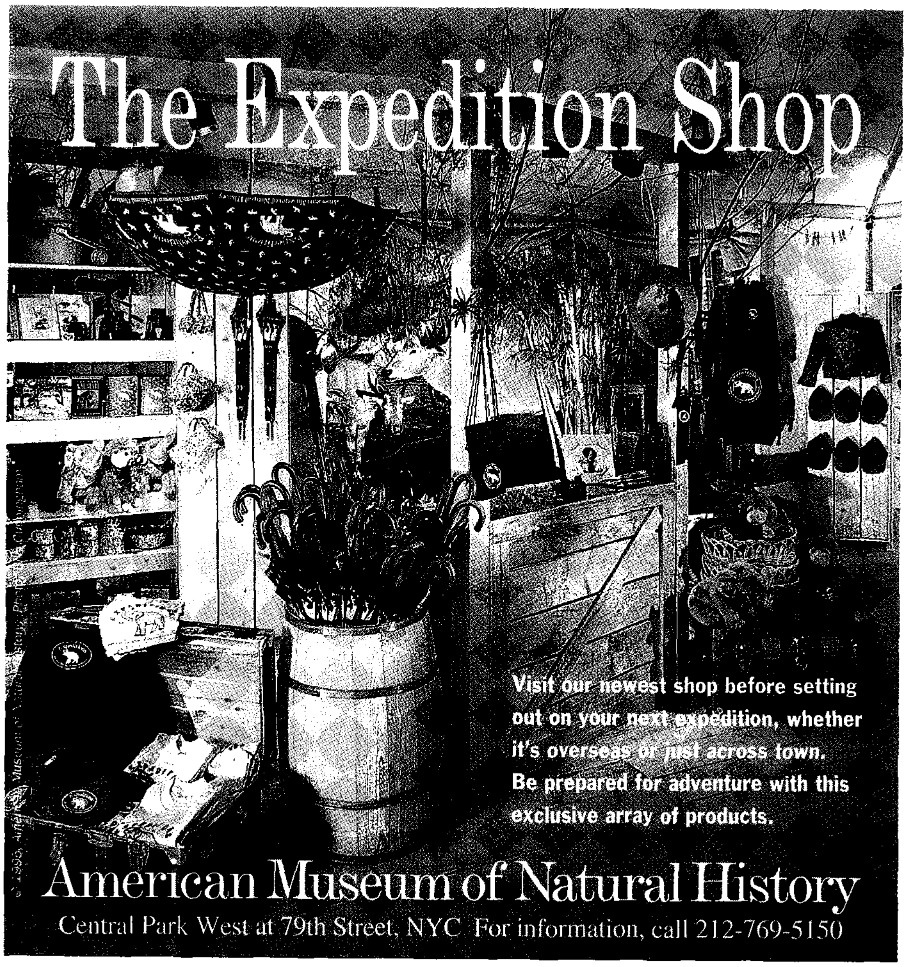
Michael Kinsley's Comment ("Let Them Eat Laptops," January 23rd) was ridiculous. I don't like Newt Gingrich, either, but to transpose an obviously silly remark into the question of whether Republicans "seriously wish to defend a vision of America where all citizens are guaranteed laptop computers but not health care" shows how carried away one can get. If Mr. Kinsley really wants to see the "phony" he writes of, let him look in the mirror.

WARREN F. SMITH
Tucson, Ariz.

I enjoyed Mr. Kinsley's skewering of Newt Gingrich, but his analysis of Republican largesse stops short. Gingrich and company can feel free to propose tax credits precisely because no poor people would benefit from them. A tax credit that no one can use is perfect for Republican purposes. It has no effect on the budget. It gives nothing to the poor, who are all, of course, undeserving. At the same time, it shows that today's Republican leaders, like George Bush a few long years ago, are trying to build a "kinder, gentler nation." Finally, the generous gesture absolves Newt and the millionaires he represents of any lingering guilt over the suffering their policies have already inflicted and will continue to inflict: The poor had their chance, after all. Let them pull themselves up by their mouses.

DENNIS FISCHMAN
Somerville, Mass.

*Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.*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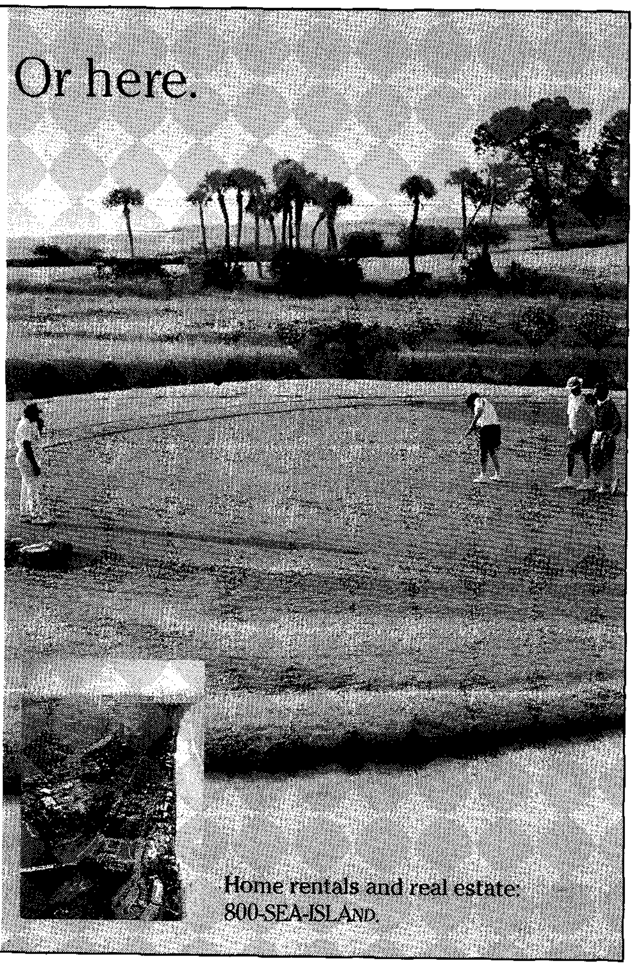
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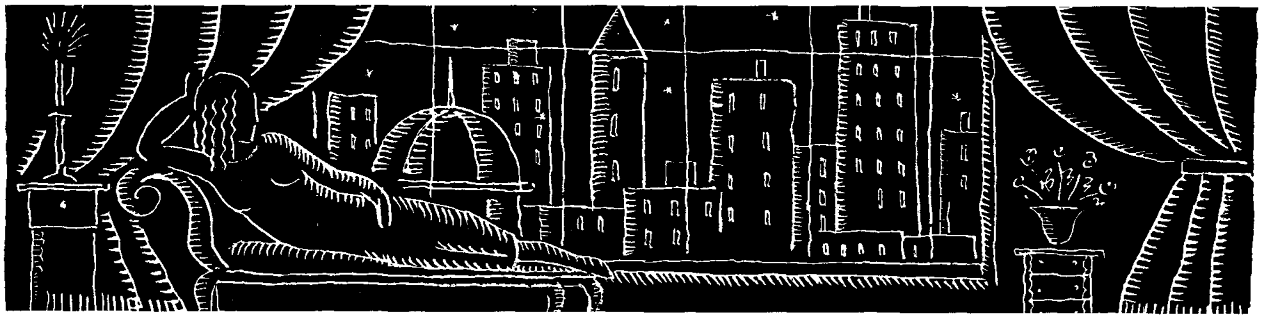

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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## THE THEATRE

### *Another "Vanya"*

Moviegoers who have seen the virtuoso Louis Malle–André Gregory "Vanya on 42nd Street" may wonder why they should bother so soon with another version of Chekhov's 1899 masterpiece. But the "Uncle Vanya" that has just opened at Circle in the Square is as rewarding as it is different from the one that Gregory and his cast concocted a few blocks south. This time, it is the play's emptiness that resounds. Braham Murray's theatre-in-the-round production has the characters taking languid strolls across a near-vacant stage; in their predictable rural lives, happiness is as intermittent as the lightning that flashes brilliantly along the theatre's upper reaches during the storm scenes.

But the performances provide constant happiness. As Astrov, James Fox has the requisite fine looks and caressing voice that so allure Sonya (Kate Skinner) and the skill to convey the weak will behind the doctor's dreams and visions. As Vanya, Tom Courtenay communicates an altogether different brand of sadness: his clear, steady cadences suggest a man who has long thought about the painful facts of his indifferent life but who can articulate them only when change is threatening. "If you don't have a life," Vanya declares in an Act II speech that gives Courtenay one of his most resonant moments, "pretending is better than nothing."

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)*

**Arcadia**—The American première of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, with Blair Brown and Victor Garber. Previews begin March 2. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Damn Yankees**—Last year's revival of the 1955 musical returns from a hiatus, with Jerry Lewis in his Broadway début, as Mr. Applegate. The new version is in previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

**Death Defying Acts**—A trio of short plays by Woody Allen ("Central Park West"), David Mamet ("An Interview"), and Elaine May ("Hotline"). Previews through March 5. Opens March 6 at 6:45. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

**Don Juan in Chicago**—The legendary Spanish seducer leaves Seville for twentieth-century Chicago in a new comedy by David Ives (of "All in the Timing" fame). Previews begin March 3. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

**The Heiress**—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 play based on the Henry James novel "Washington Square." With Philip Bosco, Cherry Jones, Frances Sternhagen, and Jon Tenney. In previews. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

**Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman**—A one-man comedy about the relationship between men and women, written and performed by Mr. Becker. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

**Rush Limbaugh in Night School**—In Charlie Varon's one-man play, the conservative talk-show host is taking Spanish at the New School with a bunch of left-wingers. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

**Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller**—The early days of rock and roll are celebrated in a musical revue in which you can expect to hear "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "Stand by Me," "Kansas City," and more. Two previews on March 1. Opens March 2 at 6:45. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

### OPENED RECENTLY

**After-Play**—Anne Meara's comedy, about two couples who get together for an after-theatre dinner, shows a real ear for the rhythms of conversation and the dynamics between couples who have known each other forever. Rue McClanahan, Merwin Goldsmith, Larry Keith, and the droll Barbara Barrie—old pros all—make a believable and entertaining foursome. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/13/95.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 5.)

**Beauty's Daughter**—A one-woman show by the New York-born poet-actress Dael Orlandersmith. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

**Body Shop**—The actors think they're in a musical about the dignity of stripping; many of the men in the audience, to judge from the whoops, think they're watching a strip show. Is this a great country, or what? Walter Marks, who wrote the song "I've Gotta Be Me," bears the responsibility, and Sue Lawless, for some reason, directed. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

**Buk—The Life and Times of Charles Bukowski**—A play by Paul Peditto, based on the poet and novelist's writings. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes March 11.)

**Camping with Henry and Tom**—A play by Mark St. Germain, inspired by an actual camping trip undertaken in 1921 by Henry Ford, President Harding, and Thomas Edison. With John Cunningham, Ken Howard, and Robert Prosky. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

**Carmen**—Ridiculous Theatrical Company playwrights Everett Quinton and Eureka have borrowed liberally from classic camp movies (especially "Caged") to come up with a suitably Ridiculous take on Prosper Mérimée's tragic tale. Quinton is in top form as the hot-blooded, coldhearted gypsy. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

**Circus Life**—A new comedy by Murray Schisgal, about two male law partners who fall in love with the same younger woman. Mike Burstyn, Keith Langsdale, and Tresha Rodriguez are the *trois*. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)**—A hundred-and-five-minute version of the Bard's entire œuvre: comedies, tragedies, histories, and poems. Written by Jess Winfield, Adam Long, and Daniel Singer. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

**The Hairy Ape**—The Wooster Group presents a workshop production of Eugene O'Neill's 1922 play, with Willem Dafoe, Kate Valk, and others. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes March 5.)

**Hapgood**—Tom Stoppard's 1988 play looks at the world of espionage through the lens of particle physics, and the production is as mesmerizing as the play is bewildering. Stockard Channing, Josef Sommer, and David Strathairn give confident, watchable performances. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Henry VI**—Theatre for a New Audience has distilled Shakespeare's trilogy into two parts, which run in repertory. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

**Holiday Heart**—In Cheryl L. West's play, an unusual guardian angel (Keith Randolph Smith) helps a girl (Afi McClendon) cope with growing up in the inner city. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

**Iphigenia and Other Daughters**—Ellen McLaughlin has adapted three Greek tragedies into an hour-and-forty-minute meditation on women and history. The occasional banality notwithstanding, she has put human faces on the icons of tragedy. The cast, directed by David Esbjornson, does moving work; the sets, lights, and, especially, sound are superb—they enhance the production without ever overwhelming the actors. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes March 5.)

**I've Got the Shakes**—In the center of Richard Foreman's latest piece of metaphysical mischief, Jan Leslie Harding gives a remarkably composed performance as Madeline X, a somewhat bewildered teacher who hopes to enlighten a place called Ignorance. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

**Jelly Roll!**—The snakily elegant Vernel Bagneris plays Jelly Roll Morton, in a terrific show that traces the musician's transformation from New Orleans dandy into jazz legend. Morten Gunnar Larsen provides the thrilling piano accompaniment. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

**Loot**—Joe Orton's 1965 farce is a good and proper lambasting of British civility, in which respect for the church, respect for the law, and respect for the dead are all highly suspect principles. Unfortunately, the Independent Theatre Company's modest production stumbles as it strives to keep pace with the bad-boy playwright. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 18.)

**Love! Valour! Compassion!**—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written drama connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Under the nimble direction of Joe Mantello, seven actors (including Stephen Bogardus, John Glover—doing double duty as identical twins—and the wonderful Nathan Lane) present humbling evidence of what love is and can be. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

**The Molière Comedies**—Richard Wilbur dedicated his translations of "The School for Husbands" and "The Imaginary Cuckold" to Brian Bedford, and Mr. Bedford more than lives up to the accolade in two wonderful comic performances—as a crusty old fool and a blustery old fool. The good supporting cast includes Remak Ramsay, Malcolm Gets, and Suzanne Bertish. Directed by Michael Langham. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

**Oedipus at Colonus**—The aftermath: less intrinsically interesting, with far too many speeches. Even so, Robert Hock's ragged, palsied, yet increasingly dignified Oedipus is worth a trip to the Pearl Theatre Company's new home. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes March 18.)

**The Old Lady's Guide to Survival**—June Havoc stars in a play by Mayo Simon. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

**Raised in Captivity**—A new play by Nicky Silver. Patricia Clarkson, Peter Frechette, Brian Kerwin, Anthony Rapp, and Leslie Ayvazian make up the cast. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

**Show Boat**—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

**Silence, Cunning, Exile**—The life of photographer Diane Arbus inspired this play by Stuart Greenman. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes March 12.)

**Spoonbread and Strawberry Wine**—Norma Jean Darden—model, caterer, actress—shares recipes and talks about her family, in a performance inspired by the cookbook she wrote with her sister Carole Darden. Good food and drink are served, along with dessert and song (the rich baritone of Jou Jou Papailler), and audience members are invited to tell a few stories of their own. It all has the feel of an evening of home movies: cozy, charming, but not very interesting. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

**Sunset Boulevard**—Glenn Close takes the monumental role of Norma Desmond and makes it something all her own, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's homage to Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's 1950 fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia. After the March 5 performance, Ms. Close takes a two-week vacation; Karen Mason fills in for her March 7-19. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

**That's Life!**—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

**Twelfth Night**—Anne C. Patterson's radiant harlequin costumes and her lustrous set (a literal hall of mirrors—dozens of them) cast a bright glow on a fine production of Shakespeare's comedy. The Willow Cabin Theatre Company, now in its eighth season, offers several strong performances. Laurence Gleason is supremely dour as the yellow-stockinged Malvolio. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes March 5.)

**Uncle Vanya**—Tom Courtenay has the title role in Chekhov's play. The cast also includes Amanda Donohoe, James Fox, and Werner Klemperer. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

**Vita & Virginia**—Eileen Atkins' Virginia Woolf shares the stage with Vanessa Redgrave's Vita Sackville-West in a play that Atkins put together from the letters that the women exchanged during their eighteen-year friendship. Redgrave is imposing and glamorous, but the brilliance of Woolf's writing stacks the theatrical deck in Atkins' favor, and she gives a quietly sensational, riveting performance. Zoe Caldwell directed. (12/12/94) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Closes March 19.)

*Tom Courtenay and James Fox, in "Uncle Vanya."*

JOSEF ASTOR

**You Should Be So Lucky**—A long and largely unrewarding comedy in which Charles Busch appears, out of drag, as a shrinking-violet electrologist who comes into his own via an unlikely benefactor (Stephen Pearlman). Nell Campbell plays his sister. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. Closes March 5.)

### LONG RUNS

**ALL IN THE TIMING:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN INSPECTOR CALLS:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JACKIE MASON: POLITICALLY INCORRECT:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **THREE TALL WOMEN:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

### IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Stars on Ice**—Skaters Kristi Yamaguchi, Scott Hamilton, Paul Wylie, and other big-time axelites. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 4 at 8.)

## DANCE

**Erick Hawkins Dance Company**—The company's first New York engagement since Hawkins' death, in November, reflects the choreographer's career-long commitments, with dances that allude to non-Western metaphysics (the primal kinship of man and animal, in "Plains Daybreak," and irreverent Sioux rituals, in "Hey-oka") and the natural world (the night sky, in "Black Lake," and the monumental landscape of the Southwest, in "Agathlon"). The Erick Hawkins Orchestra accompanies all performances. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 1-3 at 8, March 4 at 2 and 8, and March 5 at 2 and 7:30.)

**Merce Cunningham Dance Company**—Opening night of the two-week engagement: "Beach Birds," "MinEvent," and "Sounddance." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 7 at 7:30. Through March 19.)

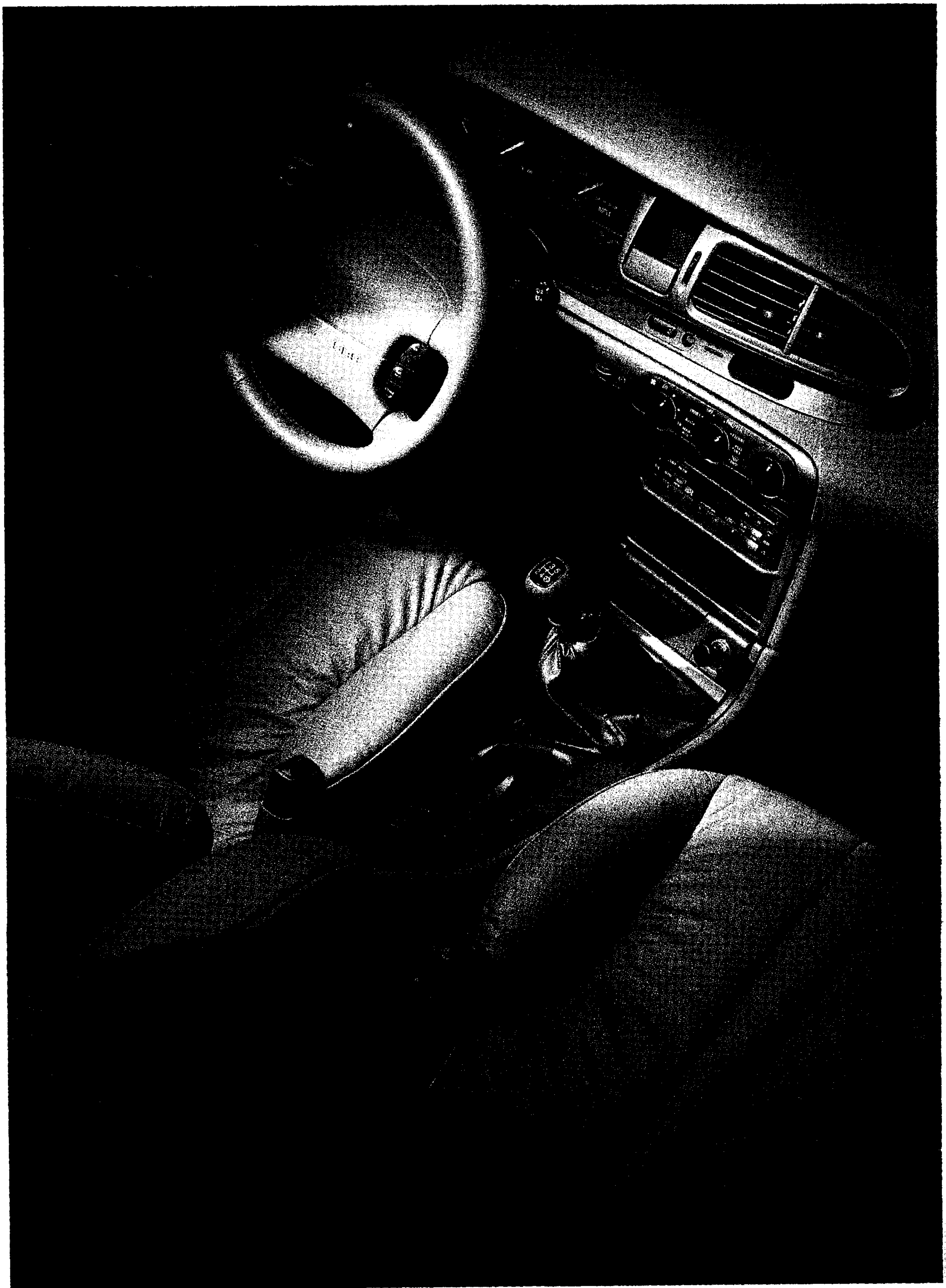
**Food for Thought**—Three evenings of dance by young choreographers, to benefit East Village food-distribution programs. March 3: Hope Clark, DD Dorvillier, Erin Fitzgerald, and Maureen Ellenhorn; curated by Dan Froot. March 4: Karen Graham, Hiroko Ishimura, Marc Kenison, Karen Love, and Christalyn Wright; curated by Melissa Wynn. March 5: Rosane Chamecki & Andrea Lerner, Jeanine Durning, Curt Haworth, Guta Hedewig, and Jonathan Kinzel; curated by David Dorfman. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Evenings at 8:30.)

**"Excessories"**—Choreographer John Jasperse intentionally mismatches elements of gender and gesture in these works for cross-dressed dancers. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 2-4 at 8 and March 5 at 3.)

**"Voices Through Time"**—Susan Roebuck Caligaris in six solo dances and two duets. The pieces, created over the past ten years, have a variety of tones—polemical, comic, dramatic, abstract—and a personal, almost diaristic effect. (Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St., 11th floor. 475-2555. March 3 at 9 and March 4 at 8.)

**Klixbüll Dance Company**—The seven-member company, in "Pulse," a full-length work. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 924-0077. March 3-4 at 8 and March 5 at 2 and 7.)

**Anna Sokolow's Players' Project**—The revered modern-dance choreographer recently celebrated her eighty-fifth birthday, but she isn't resting: this engagement includes a première, "September Sonnet," and a reconstruction of "Ride the Culture Loop," from 1975. (Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. March 1-3 at 8, March 4 at 2:30 and 8, and March 5 at 2:30.)



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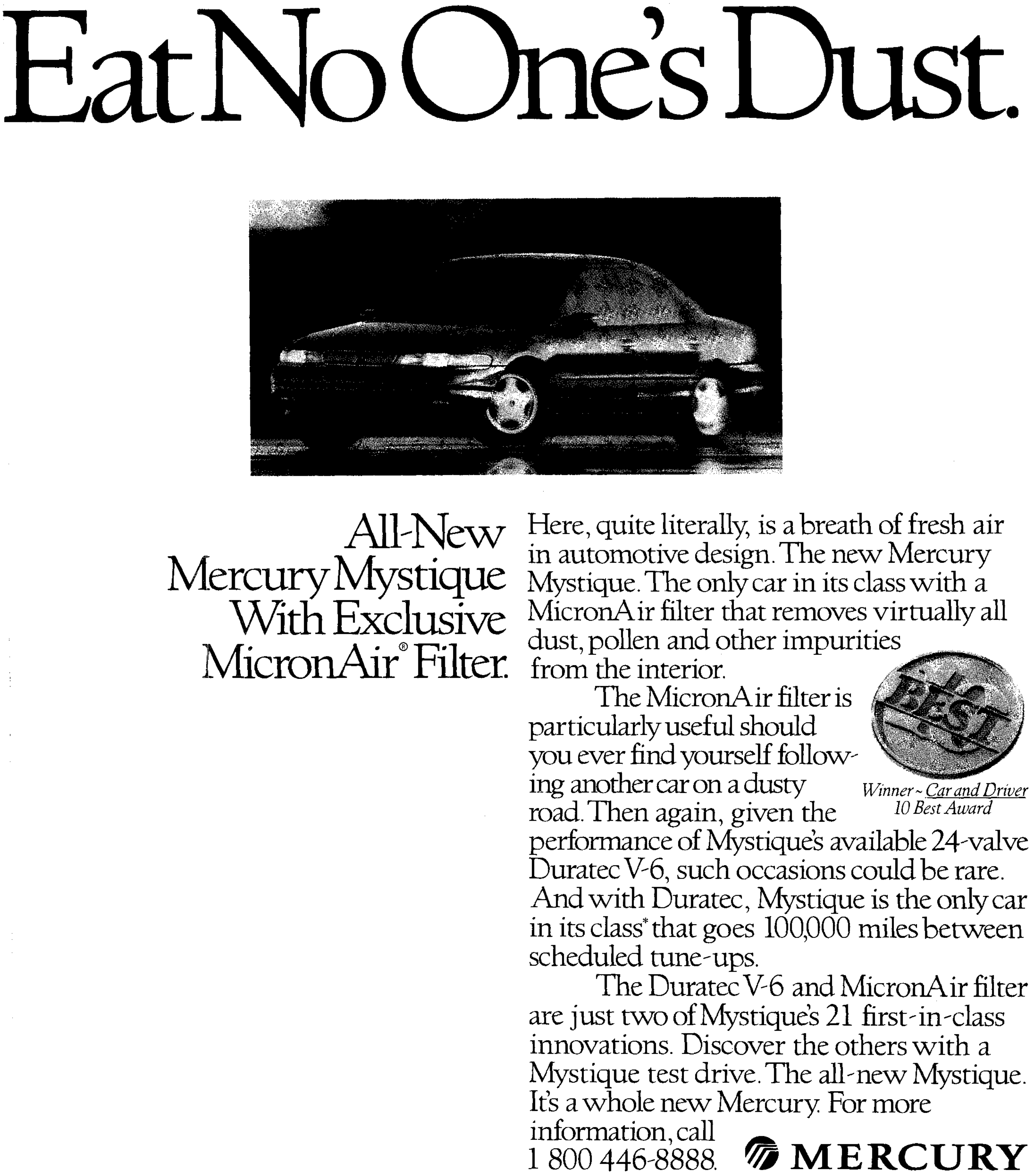

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# NIGHT LIFE

## *Punk and Punker*

BEING dumb and depressed is big these days. And with lyrics like "I may be dumb but I'm not a dweeb / I'm just a sucker with no self-esteem," it's no wonder that the Offspring have sold three million records. Since débuting last April, the band's aptly titled "Smash" has become the largest-selling independent album of all time. Along with fellow-Californians Green Day (whose album "Dookie" has sold six million copies—on a major label), they've been saturating radio, MTV, and the record shops with so much spleen and sputum that *Rolling Stone* was forced to ask, "Can it be that the whole world has gone punk?"

Not that the Offspring are your garden-variety punkers. In fact, the quartet's whopping success owes less to the tao of punk than it does to their contagious, skillfully arranged songs and funny, self-deprecating wordplay ("The more you suffer / the more it shows you really care . . . *right?*"). Whatever their lyrics may claim, though, these guys are no dummies. The band's weedy singer, Bryan (Dexter) Holland, graduated from high school as valedictorian, with a special gift for math (presumably he'll have no problem tallying up the royalties), and bassist Greg Kriesel has his eye on law school—someday. When the Offspring rumble into Roseland for a thunderous three-night stand on March 3-5, they'll offer proof that if the world is going punk, at least it won't be stupid.

### CONCERTS

**CHARLES MCPHERSON**—The noted alto saxophonist is coming off a terrific recording, "First Flight Out." A Californian by way of Detroit, this Charlie Parkerite and former Mingus star still keeps one foot in Kansas City and the other in New York; his blues-soaked bop reconciles the classic with the modern. Featuring pianist Michael Weiss, bassist Peter Washington, and drummer Victor Lewis. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 3 at 8.)

**PANTERA**—Punk may be hip again, but heavy-metal still rules the suburbs: early last year, these self-proclaimed "cowboys from hell" had the No. 1 record in the country. Live, the boys promise to "crush at your ears like a vice [sic]." (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. March 6 at 8.)

**GYUTO MONKS**—In a concert of Tibetan chant. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 2 at 8.)

**OLIVER LAKE AND THURMAN BAKER**—As part of Merkin's "Interpretations" series, the jazz saxophonist and the drummer will each perform new works. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 2 at 8.)

**CONCORDIA ORCHESTRA**—The chamber orchestra, conducted by Marin Alsop, presents "Country Meets Classical"; guest artists include fiddler extraordinaire Mark O'Connor. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 2 at 8.)

**JIMMIE DALE GILMORE AND GUY CLARK**—Two amazing West Texas singer-songwriters, in a benefit concert. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 2 at 7.)

**"SO NICE TO COME HOME TO . . ."**—A concert recreating a nineteen-forties U.S.O. show. With Julie Wilson, KT Sullivan, David Staller, Liliane Montevecchi, and others. (Town Hall. March 3 at 8.)

**CLARENCE FOUNTAIN AND THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA**—The stars of the 1983 musical "The Gospel at Colonus" return to New York for a heavenly evening of harmony and testifying. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 4 at 8.)

*Henry Threadgill, at Sweet Basil.*

**DAVID BENOIT**—The jazz keyboardist. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 4 at 8.)

**PIERCE TURNER**—In an evening of Irish folk music. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 6 at 8.)

### JAZZ AND STANDARDS

*(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)*

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL,** 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the Oak Room, **PETER HOWARD** salutes the great Broadway musicals. Dining.

**BLUE NOTE,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 5: a double bill featuring **GEORGE SHEARING** and **TOMMY FLANAGAN.** Shearing rules over that stylistic netherworld where swing meets bop meets supper club meets classical. Flanagan presides over all of jazz piano, unreeling endlessly supple lines and paying them out at whatever tempo they demand. He likes to spread a melody out in chords, then compress it into single-note improvisations that contain sudden ascending arpeggios, beautiful little counter-melodies, and patches of mock double time. A great week for piano lovers. Dining.

**BRADLEY'S,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Through March 5: pianist **MULGREW MILLER** swings with a trio. Vocalist-pianist **FREDDY COLE** begins a weeklong run on March 6. Dining.

**CARLYLE HOTEL,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the wonderful **BARBARA COOK.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the suave and sybaritic **RONNY WHYTE** is in attendance.

**DANNY'S SKYLIGHT ROOM,** 346 W. 46th St. (265-8130)—March 5: The deep-voiced, free-spirited **STARLA SMITH** sings, with Tony Monte on piano. Smith has cut the camp from her act and now concentrates on standards and lesser-known songs by old pros like Charles DeForest and Murray Grand.

**FAT TUESDAY'S,** 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through March 5: **ARVELL SHAW & THE LOUIS ARMSTRONG LEGACY BAND.** March 7: Vocalist **TERRY BLAINE.** On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

**FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN,** 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Thursdays through Sundays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist; on weekends he performs with a trio. Dining.

**IRIDIUM,** 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—March 3-4: **CRAIG HANDY.** One of New York's most in-demand saxophonists, Handy has shown astonishing musical growth over the past few years. But his measured, assured playing still betrays his influences—Sonny Rollins, Lester Young, and Dexter Gordon. Dining.

**KNICKERBOCKER,** 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—March 1-4: **ROLAND HANNA** and **PAUL WEST.** Originally from Detroit's fertile piano delta, Hanna is an Ellington scholar, a crackerjack blues player, and an open-armed stylist who can be as fastidious as he is funky. Dining.

**KNITTING FACTORY,** 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 1: **JOHN ZORN.** This unrelenting rabble-rouser has musically deconstructed everything from Japanese porn-film soundtracks to the hallowed scores of Ornette Coleman and Ennio Morricone. This time around he presents **XU FENG,** a new "game" piece.

**METROPOLIS,** 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—March 1: **CLAUDE (FIDDLER) WILLIAMS,** from the original Count Basie band. March 3-4: Latin jazz with **HILTON RUIZ.** Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

**MICHAEL'S PUB,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Woody Allen continues his Monday night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

**RAINBOW & STARS,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Forty-four years after her first big hit, "Come On-a My House," **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** (in through March 4) is still all warmth and welcome. In performance, she's bouncy and fun, and like her fellow-sexagenarian Tony Bennett she's been attracting an ever-broadening audience of hipsters. Her new record, "Demi-Centennial," celebrates fifty years in show biz. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

**RUSSIAN TEA ROOM,** 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—March 6: Cabaret with **NANCY LA MOTT, DAVID FRIEDMAN,** and others.

**SARDI'S,** 234 W. 44th St. (221-8444)—March 3: The **JOE TRAINA** quintet. Dining.

**SMALLS,** 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features young and up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. Vocalist **EVE ZANNI** plays every Tuesday.

**SWEET BASIL,** 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **JAVON JACKSON** quartet (with **RON CARTER**) finishes up a week's set on March 5. Jackson, a fluid and intelligent tenor saxophonist and impressive fledgling hard-bopper, is on a roll; his "When the Time Is Right" was one of last year's keepers. He is joined by bassist extraordinaire Carter. On March 7, **HENRY THREADGILL** begins a weeklong run with his new band, **VERY VERY**

CRARY PULLEN; PHOTO BY RICHARD SANDLER

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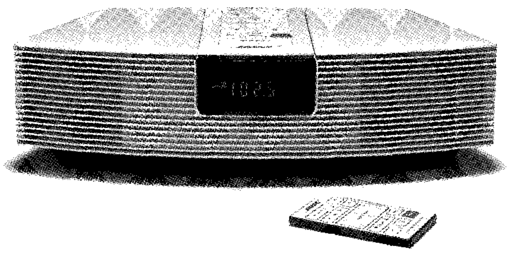

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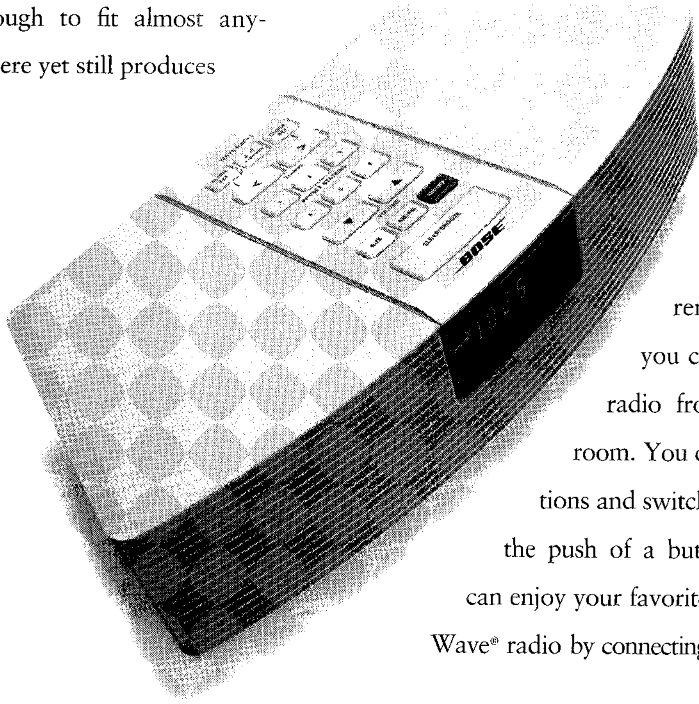

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## NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

**CIRCUS.** The saxes bray, the trumpets bark, the tubas bellow, and a joyous mess of sound erupts. If new jazz can ever be labelled fun, this is the stuff. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

**TAVERN ON THE GREEN,** Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—**FRANKIE RANDALL,** the singer and pianist, is in through March 5. Dining.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through March 3: the **STEPHEN SCOTT** trio. Scott approaches the piano differently from his peers. His phrasing and rhythms seem accountable only to his whims, and his dashing I'll-try-if-I-want-to style has all the bravado of his mentor, the masterful **BETTY CARTER,** who sings with a quintet on March 4-5. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

**VISIONES,** 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Though he's played with almost every jazz great in the twenty years since he left Czechoslovakia, **GEORGE MRAZ,** who performs March 1-4, has been drawing new waves of praise for his recent work with Tommy Flanagan's lustrous trio. March 7: **KEVIN HAYS.** It's clear that Hays has heard his share of sixties Blue Note records: sometimes his ersatz modal bop gets a bit thick. But keep an eye on this pianist—it's probably just a phase.

### ROCK, ETC.

**ACADEMY,** 234. W 43rd St.—March 2: **BUDDY GUY,** a guitarist's guitarist who's finally getting his due. Both his 1991 breakthrough album and his 1993 autobiography were called "Damn Right I've Got the Blues." March 4: **BOB MOULD** performs a solo acoustic show. The Sugar front man (and former Hüsker Dü dude) earned heady praise for last year's "File Under Easy Listening." He's a dangerously inventive guitarist and a fine singer. March 8: **OASIS.** The sibling rivalry between vocalist Liam Gallagher and guitarist and songwriter Noel Gallagher is the stuff of legend in the U.K., where Oasis is hugely popular. The band's 1994 début, "Definitely Maybe," was a brash, muscular record. (For information about tickets, call 307-7171.)

**BLARNEY STAR,** 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—March 3: An evening of Irish folk music with **JIMMY CROWLEY.**

**BOTTOM LINE,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Blues legend **AL KOOPER** swings by on March 2. March 3: **ED PALERMO** and his ten-piece band play the music of Frank Zappa. March 4: **BUSTER POINDEXTER.**

**BROWNIES,** 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—March 5: Cocktail-lounge cool with **BLACK VELVET FLAG.** March 7 belongs to **IDAHO.** Last year, Idaho quietly released "This Way Out," their second album and one of the most criminally ignored records of the year. The band blends the guitar-driven aggression of Dinosaur Jr. with the despair and sonic austerity of bands like the Blue Nile and Helium—an unlikely combination that should be particularly striking in concert.

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands. March 3: **JAWBOX.** . . . ¶ Next door, the neat and comfortable testament to gentrification called CB's Gallery plays host to **ED KUEPPER** (formerly of the Saints) on March 4.

**CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.,** 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Mississippi guitar wrangler and Chuck Berry disciple **EDDY CLEARWATER** lays it down March 1-4.

**DUPLEX,** 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. S. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **DRESSING ROOM DIVAS** entertain every Friday night.

**FEZ,** 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—March 1: **FONTELLA BASS,** best known for her 1965 hit "Rescue Me," is a singer with an earthshaking voice. Her new record, "No Ways Tired," is packed with organ-driven gospel and blues. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

**FLANNERY'S,** 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

**IRVING PLAZA,** 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—March 6: **FISHBONE.** A Fishbone show could be described as vaudevillian hardcore. It's a remarkable mixture of chaotic humor and volume, and the band often seems on the verge of exploding. Despite their spasmodic energy, their material is weak, and by the end of a show you feel as if you've just sat through an Oliver Stone retrospective. **BUSH** drops in on March 7. . . . ¶ Every Sunday night, the Swing Dance Society pays homage to the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

**KAPTAIN BANANA,** 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Three drag queens and eight dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.

**LIMELIGHT,** Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. March 7: **BAD MANNERS.** Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

**LOLA,** 30 W. 22nd St. (366-5652)—March 3-4: Blistering midnight blues with two phenomenal guitarists, **LITTLE JIMMY KING** and **STEVE JOHNSON.** Dining.

**LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ,** 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest below-stairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

**MANNY'S CAR WASH,** 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. March 1: The **HIRAM BULLOCK** band.

**MAXWELL'S,** 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. March 4: **EVERCLEAR.**

**MERCURY LOUNGE,** 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 2: **POND.** March 4: **STEVE WYNN** and **GUTTERBALL.**

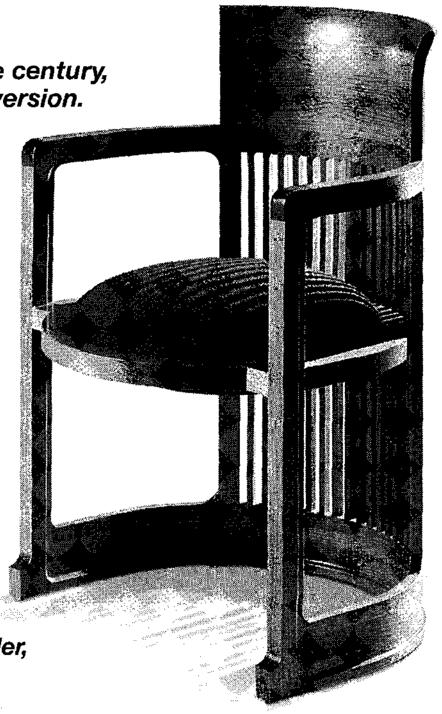
**PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR,** 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

**ROSELAND,** 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week it's another dark, sweaty rock club. March 3-5: The **OFFSPRING.**

**TRAMPS,** 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—March 6: **SOUL ASYLUM.** Since their 1992 single "Runaway Train" earned a Grammy for Best Rock Song, this Minneapolis quartet has done the requisite thirty-city tour, performed at Woodstock II, and appeared on the cover of *Rolling Stone.* With a new album due out in May, this small-club blitz is probably your only chance to see them up close.

**WEBSTER HALL,** 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

**WETLANDS,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—March 1: The **SUN RA INTERGALATIC ARKESTRA,** under the direction of **JOHN GILMORE.** March 4: Former Doors guitarist **ROBBY KRIEGER** appears with his band.



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**New York**

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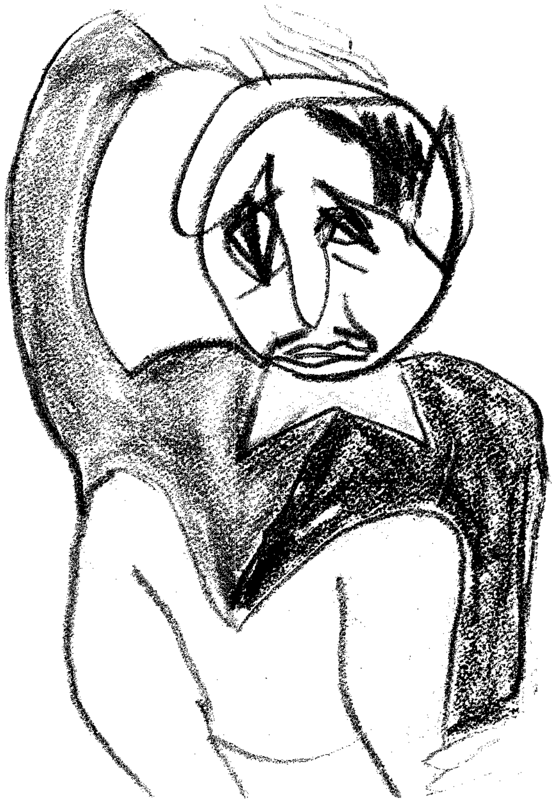
# ART

## *The Captain's Colors*

Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band were among the strangest rock groups of the sixties, which is saying something. Their proto-postmodernist brand of Dada blues made Frank Zappa—the Captain's best friend in high school and the producer of such warped Beefheart classics as "Trout Mask Replica"—sound tame by comparison. In 1982, after making a dozen albums that didn't sell, Captain Beefheart, *né* Don Van Vliet, decided he was so far ahead of his time that the world wasn't going to catch up, so he abandoned music for painting, which had been a parallel vocation since his youth.

The music may have been ahead of its time, but "God's Empty Socks and Other Paintings," Van Vliet's new exhibition at Michael Werner (21 East 67th Street; through March 18), is a throwback to the incense-and-peppermint self-indulgence of the sixties. That isn't to say that it's not substantial work. The influences are obvious—Kline is there in the bold black thunderbolts that crash across the frame; Twombly has left his mark in the scribbling and color play. But Van Vliet isn't just another competent modernist. The best of these paintings, such as the crude, earth-toned "Paris Cow," have a raw magic you find only in the work of autodidacts, from the Lascaux cave paintings to the light shows at the Fillmore East.



*Self-portrait by Don Van Vliet.*

### MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"R. B. Kitaj," a retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the expatriate artist. (A concurrent show is at Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.) . . . ¶ "The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France" gives plenty of play to the religious and dynastic violence of the period but adds another dimension by documenting the complex artistic temperament that flourished during that tormented era. Through March 19. . . . ¶ Some eighty examples of the creative confluence of Eastern and Western styles are on view in "Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress." From eighteenth-century court gowns to the recent inspirations of Issey Miyake and Romeo Gigli, luxury and fantasy are the leitmotivs. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Greek Gold." Forget embarrassment—this is a *humiliation* of riches, as splendid an exhibition of Classical jewelry as we're ever likely to see. The workmanship throughout is so delicate that you may want to bring a magnifying glass. Through March 26. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of video installations, sculptural objects, walk-in environments, and sound pieces by Bruce Nauman. Starts March 5. . . . ¶ "Kandinsky: Compositions." Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter who invented abstractionism, groped his way there with gingerly care, marking the milestones in his evolution with a numbered series of large-scale "Compositions." In this quiet little blockbuster exhibition, the museum has united the seven surviving canvases for the first time. Enhanced by preliminary studies and by photographs of the lost works, the exhibit documents the progress of Kandinsky's expanding vision with elegance and precision. Through April 25. . . . ¶ A selection of drawings from the sixties by such sculptors as Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Dan Flavin, Kenneth Snelson, and Sol LeWitt is on view. . . . ¶ Nancy Rubins' new installation, "MOMA and Airplane Parts," is a suspended accumulation of torn and bent engine casings, fuselages, and wings. Through March 14. . . . ¶ "Max Beckmann Prints" includes lithographs, drypoints, and woodcuts from throughout the German Expressionist's career. . . . ¶ Recent photographic acquisitions are on view, including works by Rudy Burckhardt, Hans Bellmer, Jan Groover, Gilles Peress, and Mariana Yampolsky. Through April 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

**Guggenheim Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A mid-career retrospective of seventy paintings by Ross Bleckner includes his stripe paintings; suites from the "Architecture of the Sky," "Invisible Heaven," and "Unknown Quantities of Light" series; and a new series of canvases. Starts March 3. . . . ¶ Ten years of work by Félix González-Torres: strings of light bulbs, spills of candy, stacks of printed matter, photo-jigsaw puzzles, "date-caption" pieces, and photos of his billboards. Starts March 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

**Guggenheim Museum SoHo,** 575 Broadway—Fifty-six paintings by Antoni Tàpies, in a retrospective of the Catalan artist's career. Through April 23. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until

grippy.

One of the differences
between greatness
and mere eccentricity,
is an ability in the truly great
*to draw out the genius*
in another.

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### ART—Cont'd

8. . . . ¶ A concurrent show of paintings by Tàpies is at Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

**Whitney Museum of American Art,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." Through March 15. . . . ¶ "Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney: Printmakers' Patron." This modest exhibition—a tribute to the museum's founder—includes many nice pieces by, among others, Stuart Davis, Edward Hopper, Paul Cadmus, and Whitney's gloomy favorite, John Sloan. Through March 12. . . . ¶ "Franz Kline: Black & White, 1950-61." Through March 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

**Brooklyn Museum,** Eastern Parkway—"Thomas Cole: Landscape into History" presents arcadian and allegorical visions of New World wilderness by the English-born founder of the Hudson River school. Through April 2. . . . ¶ "Grand Reserves" gives museumgoers a chance to see eleven recently restored and reframed paintings from the museum's storerooms, including works by William Merritt Chase, Louis Remy Mignot, Arthur B. Davies, and others. Through March 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**Asia Society,** Park Ave. at 70th St.—"New Finds, Old Treasures." Eighty examples of Chinese ceramics, including two jars from a previously unknown Neolithic culture (circa 2000 B.C.). Through June 18. . . . ¶ "Indian and Southeast Asian Art," a display of rare paintings, ceramics, and bronzes from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection. Through March 26. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**Jewish Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Camille Pissarro: Impressionist Innovator" includes many of the artist's landscapes, figure paintings, family portraits, and Japonism-inspired design experiments. . . . ¶ "Jewish Life in Tsarist Russia: A World Rediscovered." Through March 5. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**Morgan Library,** 29 E. 36th St.—More than a hundred illuminated manuscripts make up "The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450-1550." Through May 7. . . . ¶ "In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition." A large group of books from the house of the master printer who introduced roman and italic type and the radical idea of portable printed books. Through April 9. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Museum of the City of New York,** Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"A Century Apart: Images of Struggle & Spirit, Jacob Riis and Five Contemporary Photographers." Documents of the city's poor by the nation's first photojournalist, alongside work on similar themes by Martine Barrat, Mary Ellen Mark, Margaret Morton, Jeffrey Henson Scales, and Fred R. Conrad. . . . ¶ The area from Union Square to Madison Square, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, was known to the late Victorians as Ladies Mile, and "Ladies Mile: Emporia and Entertainment" revels in clothes, accessories, dolls, and memorabilia from that time and place. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**The New Museum,** 583 Broadway—Fifty large-scale photographs by Andres Serrano. Examples from all of his thematic series since 1983—including "Bodily Fluids," "Ejaculations," "Immersions" (whence came the notorious "Piss Christ"), "Morgue," and the new "Gun"—are here. Through April 9. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays until 8.)

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—All forty of Lawrence Weiner's artist books, along with posters, matchbooks, plates, and other objects, are gathered in the peculiarly titled "Learn to Read Art The Books: Lawrence Weiner." Through April 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition on the works of the French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695) is in the Solomon Room. Seventeenth-century music sets the tone for the display of rare books, drawings, scores, and other objects. Through April 15. . . . ¶ "e.e. cummings @ 100: An Anniversary Exhibition." (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

**Queens Museum of Art,** Flushing Meadow Park—"Common Ground/Uncommon Vision," a broad selection of American folk art from the Michael and Julie Hall Collection, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, and religious carvings, along with toys, walking sticks, and other functional objects. Through April 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5. . . . **NOTE:** A concurrent show of work from the same collection is at the PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St., through April 14. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

### GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)*

**Robert Arneson** (1930-92)—Eight bronze sculptures that the artist made during the last three years of his life. Opens March 2. Through April 1. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

**Jane Freilicher**—Recent New York City and Long Island landscapes, many of them populated with orchids, parrots, and lute players. Opens March 2. Through April 1. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

**Robert Kushner**—Paintings of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, similar in theme to the enormous murals the artist has installed at the Gramercy Tavern. Opens March 3. Through April 8. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

**Martin Puryear**—Four large wood sculptures and one large tar-and-mesh piece. Opens March 3. Through April 15. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

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**Pat Andrea**—A Dutch-Argentine artist who crafts chaotic collages of young girls and tough-looking men and dogs in claustrophobic interiors that look like tiny, seedy theatre sets. These characters seem to breathe the same unwholesome air as Balthus's, but Andrea has kept some rough stylistic edges defiantly in place. "La Negrita," a beautifully finished pencil drawing nearly six feet long, broods malignantly over the gallery. Through March 4. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Christian Boltanski**—Two installations incorporating eleven hundred small archival photographs, found snapshots, and bed linens. Through March 11. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

**R. B. Kitaj**—New oils and drawings by the Cleveland-born painter, who has lived in London since 1958. (The show coincides with a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum.) Through March 4. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

**Morris Louis** (1912-62)—"Variations on a Theme—1960," a group of paintings that is a subset from the artist's "Unfurled" series. Through March 18. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Agnes Martin**—Recent paintings by an artist who didn't reach her mature style until the early sixties, when she was in her late forties. These works are in a new scale (five rather than six feet square), but the familiar horizontal stripes, in new combinations of yellow, pink, blue, and white, are still here. Through March 18. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

**Philip Pearlstein**—The artist's trademark nudes grow ever more monumental. In his new paintings, the figures seem to have gotten too big for the spaces they inhabit, like Alice after she ate that cake. The women are swathed in exotic fabrics and surrounded by fabulous Javanese sculptures; one of the male nudes is in front of an unfinished painting of himself, sitting in the same position but seen from a different point of view. Through March 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Don Van Vliet**—Recent paintings. Through March 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

**"Conspiratorial Laughter—A Friendship: Man Ray and Duchamp"**—A large display of works by both artists, including "L.H.O.O.Q.," Duchamp's famous image of a bearded and mustached Mona Lisa, and Man Ray's response, "Le Père de la Giaconde"—a cigar-smoking Leonardo da Vinci. Through April 8. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

### GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**Jonathan Borofsky**—A retrospective of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and videos. Opens March 3. Through April 1. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

**"Endurance"**—Works, including documentation of performance pieces, that explore the endurance of the body and the mind. Artists include Eleanor Antin, Skip Arnold, Chris Burden, Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose, Charlotte Moorman, and Joseph Beuys. Opens March 4. Through April 15. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

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**Lawrence Fane**—Recent wood sculptures by an artist who usually works in steel. Through March 18. (Bace, 39 Wooster St.)

**Jutta Koether**—Retro neo-expressionist paintings rendered in acrid Crayola colors. This young German necromancer seems eager to resuscitate dead styles, but if she wants to revamp painting the way Karl Lagerfeld (who peers out from behind his trademark fan in one of these paintings) did Chanel, she still has her work cut out for her. Through March 12. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**Richard Long / Alighiero e Boetti** (1940-94)—"Somerset Willow Line" (1980), an arrangement of six hundred and eight willow branches, by the peripatetic British artist. / "The Thousand Longest Rivers in the World" (1976-78), a nine-by-fifteen-foot canvas work in which the names and lengths of the rivers are embroidered in white silk on a field of different shades of green. Through April 29. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

**Ray Smith**—"Portraits of American Writers," a group of new paintings on wood and canvas. Through March 18. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

**Antoni Tàpies**—A show of recent works by the Catalan painter, which coincides with a retrospective at the Guggenheim SoHo. Through March 4. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

**"Duck!"**—A large sampling of confrontational works from 1927 to the present, including pieces by Weegee, Warhol, Ed Ruscha, Cindy Sherman, and many others. Guns abound, notably in Paul Geshlider's amusing sculpture "Tied Tubes," in which the barrels of two handguns have been twisted, and in Sherry Kerlin's startling "Little Boy Holding a Gun and a Teddy." The most upsetting images, however, deal with such inner anxieties as fear and denial (as in Arno Minkinnen's 1976 self-portrait, in which his hands grasp the back of his neck, and his face is completely hidden), and anguish (suggested by the sunken eyes of Pavel Tchelitchew's "Interior Landscape"). The bar across the street may profit from the stream of shaken visitors leaving the gallery. Through March 11. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

**Group Show**—This inaugural exhibition of a new gallery features paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs by thirty-one artists, including Robert Adams, Ellen Phelan, Charles Ray, Kay Rosen, Robert Therrien, and Bill Jacobsen. Through March 12. (Morris, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**"1995 Yamantaka Donation"**—Yamantaka is a Tibetan Buddha who represents the triumph of Buddhist wisdom over evil, suffering, and death. The first thing you confront on entering this benefit exhibition for Tibet House is a magnificent late-seventeenth- or eighteenth-century gouache on cotton depicting the Thirteen-Deity Yamantaka Father-Mother. Turning the corner, the way is partially blocked by an extraordinary Corten-steel monolith by Richard Serra. Inside, curator Diego Cortez has assembled some lovely contemporary works, including paintings by Schnabel, Taaffe, and Clemente, that seem to incorporate vaguely Buddhist motifs. Through March 4. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### *Re-Animator*

THERE is so much thought behind Richard Pare's photographs of architecture and sculpture (at Sander, 19 East 76th Street; through March 4) that if they weren't so boom-bang beautiful they'd be like photography lessons. But Pare's passion for his medium and for his subjects pushes the work well beyond instruction, into realms of pleasure and suffering. The pictures were taken, between 1984 and 1994, in Japan, Russia, India, Germany, Italy, and England, but the show doesn't feel like a world tour—it feels like a tour de force.

No single shot demonstrates Pare's expressive and technical powers better than his picture of Bernini's "Pluto and Proserpine" (in the Borghese Gallery in Rome). The photograph translates the wildness of this extraordinarily emotional seventeenth-century sculpture into utterly contemporary terms—same terrors, same desires, same mood, new era. By manipulating perspective, palette, and lighting, the photographer has brought the sculpture screamingly alive: Cerberus' teeth look ready to tear the tender skin of Proserpine, who is squeezed in Pluto's grip. You feel the warmth of flesh, not the coldness of marble. And wasn't that Bernini's goal?

**Lois Conner**—Panoramic views of ruins, temples, and towns in Cambodia and Vietnam. Opens March 2. Through April 15. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

**Dorothea Lange** (1895-1965)—"American Photographs," a selection of works from throughout the artist's career. Opens March 3. Through April 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**Joel Meyerowitz**—A collection of photographs in which the artist explores the nature of cities—specifically St. Louis, Atlanta, New York, and St. Petersburg (Russia). Opens March 2. Through April 8. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

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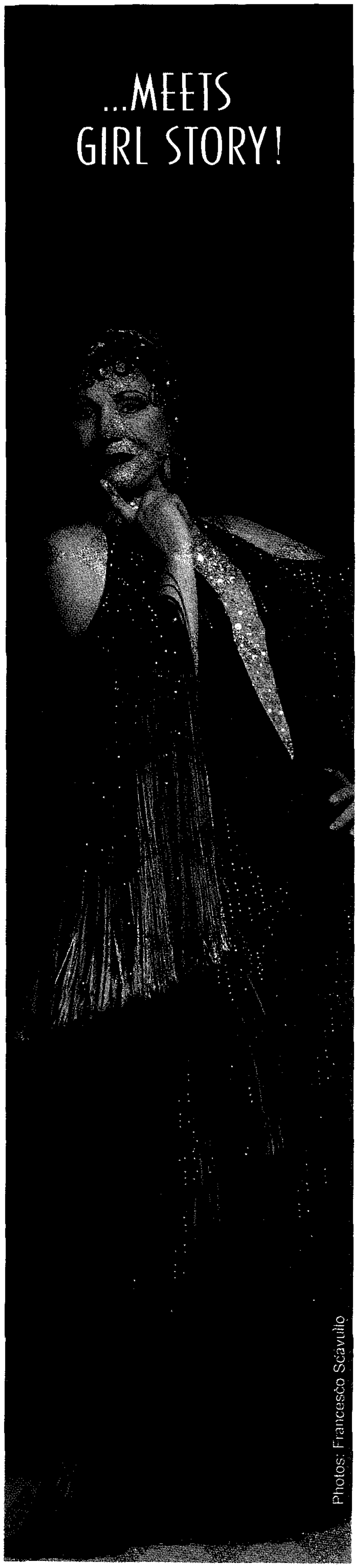
**Gregory Crewdson**—Color photographs of birds, squirrels, butterflies, and other fauna in elaborately detailed large-scale dioramas.



Photos: Francesco Scavullo

### PHOTOGRAPHY—Cont'd

Through March 25. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

**Nan Goldin**—The artist's reworked "Ballad of Sexual Dependency" (1982), a forty-five-minute color-slide-with-soundtrack presentation, is being screened three times a day, at 1, 3, and 5. Also on view are new medium-format pictures taken in Tokyo, Berlin, Salzburg, and New York, and twelve large-scale works. Through April 16. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Danny Lyon**—A large-scale exhibition representing many phases of a diverse career, from Lyon's photographs of the civil-rights movement and his trademark shots of bikers, hot-rodders, and hippies to intimate photomontages of his family. The most powerful images are those done in Texas prisons in 1967-68. Through April 8. (Lowinsky, 578 Broadway.)

**Richard Misrach**—Selections from the "Salt Flats" series and from a new series focusing on clouds. Through March 18. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

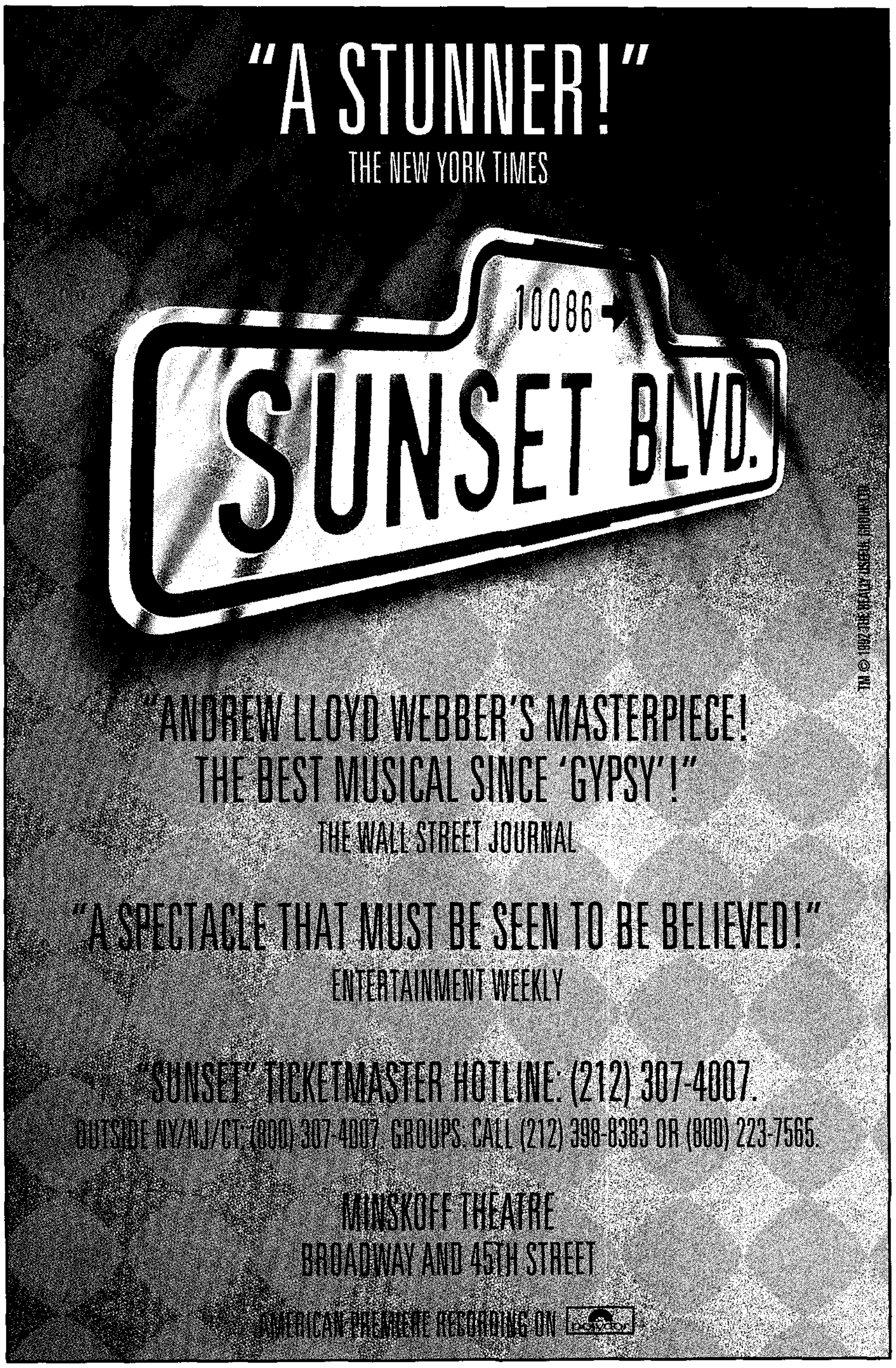
**Richard Pare**—Photographs of sculptures and architecture. Through March 4. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

**Victor Schrager / Jungjin Lee**—Images of birds in classical Audubon-style arrangements. / A group of handmade triptychs with desert and body imagery, in which an emulsion has been applied by hand on rice paper. Through March 25. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

**David Seidner**—Classically posed nudes against black backgrounds. Through March 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Robert Yarber**—Nocturnal landscape views of cemeteries, casinos, quick stops, and factories, all just as eerily lit as the artist's paintings. Through March 11. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

*(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of the City of New York, and the New Museum.)*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## CLASSICAL MUSIC

### *Honor Roll*

When the 1995 Grammy Awards are handed out on March 1, Georg Solti won't be walking onstage to accept one. That's a break from routine: the conductor has failed to win in only five of the past twenty years. This year he wasn't even nominated, but he can console himself with his collection of thirty-one awards, which makes him the all-time top Grammy winner.

Now eighty-two, Solti trained under musical figures who today seem like distant legends. Bartók, Dohnányi, and Kodály all taught the young musician in his native Hungary, and Toscanini oversaw his early conducting efforts. A series of directorships—the Chicago Symphony, the London Philharmonic, l'Orchestre de Paris, and the opera houses of Munich, Frankfurt, and Covent Garden—enabled Solti to make his mark in several genres. Today he limits his formal affiliation to the Salzburg Easter Festival, filling the rest of the year with concert and recording engagements with the upper crust of orchestras. High on that list is the august men's club known as the Vienna Philharmonic. Though he's never held an official position with the ensemble, Solti has been conducting it regularly for more than four decades. The orchestra's three programs at Carnegie Hall this week are so mainstream they border on unimaginative. But with Solti on the podium and the Vienna holding the instruments, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and the gang are likely to get a rare workout.

*(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)*

### OPERA

**Metropolitan Opera**—**DER ROSENKAVALIER**, with Mechthild Gessendorf, Anne Sofie von Otter, Heidi Grant Murphy, Stanford Olsen, Gottfried Hornik, and Franz Hawlata; conducted by James Levine. (March 1 at 7:30 and March 4 at 1:30.) . . . With Paul Groves instead of Mr. Olsen and Eric Halfvarson instead of Mr. Hawlata. (March 7 at 7:30.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA**, with Veronica Villarroel, Frank Lopardo, and Roberto Frontali; John Fiore. (March 2 at 8.) . . . **SIMON BOCCANEGRA**, with Aprile Millo, a tenor to be announced, Vladimir Chernov, and Roberto Scandiuzzi; Mr. Levine. (March 3 at 8.) . . . With Plácido Domingo in the tenor lead. (March 6 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME**, with Mary Mills, Patricia Racette, Luis Lima, and Mr. Frontali; Mr. Fiore. (March 4 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

**Kirov Opera of St. Petersburg**—Concluding performances of Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh," with Valery Gergiev conducting. Performed in Russian, with English supertitles. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. March 1 at 7, March 4 at 1, and March 5 at 2.)

**New York City Opera**—Opening performances of the spring season, which continues through April 23. **LA RONDINE**, with Stella Zambalis,

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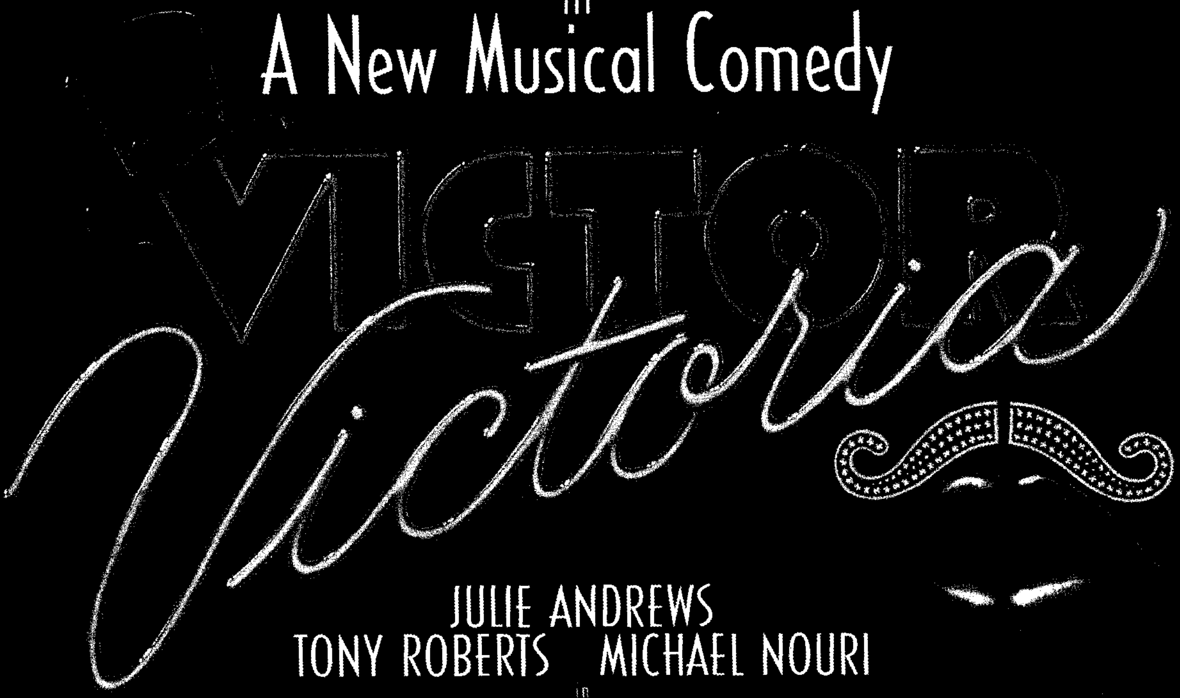

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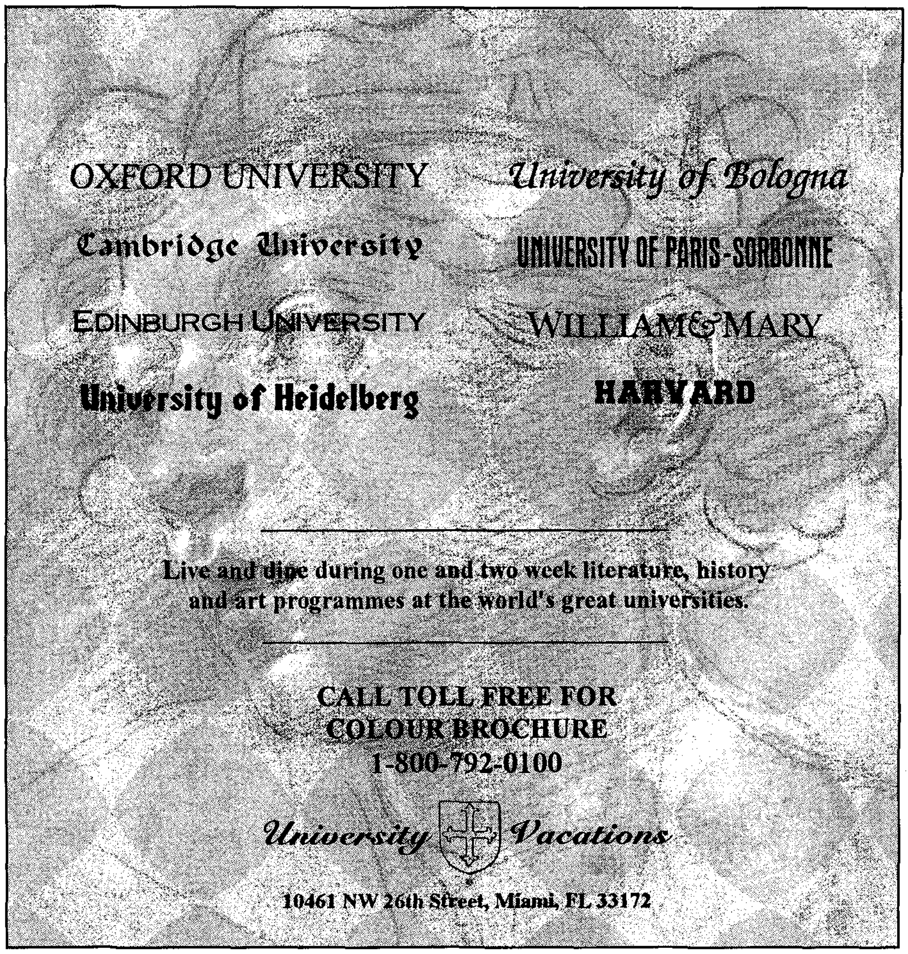

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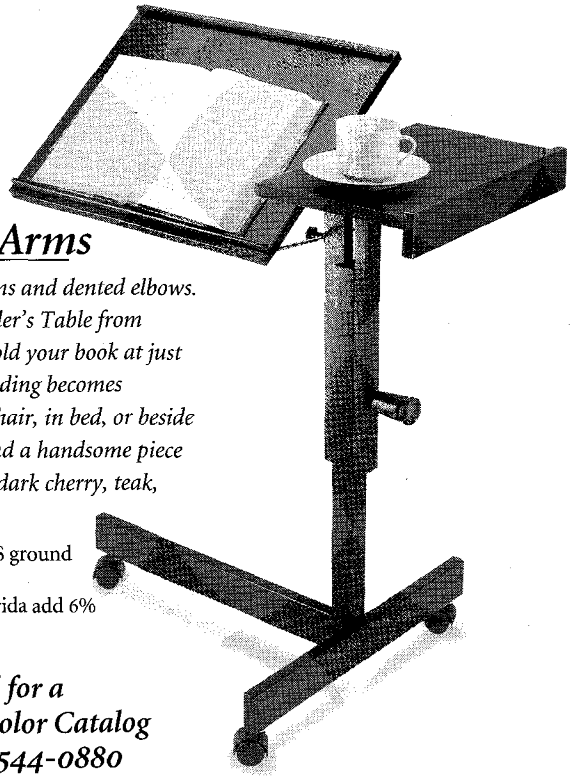

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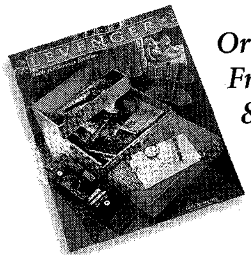

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Abbie Furmansky, Vladimir Grishko, Michael Hayes, and Joseph Corteggiano; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (March 3 and March 7 at 8.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Wendy Nielsen, Kathryn Gamberoni, Gwendolyn Jones, Jan Opalach, and Louis Otey; Christopher Keene. (March 4 at 1:30.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** with Christiane Riel, Reveka Mavrovitis, Daniel Hendrick, and Robert Perry; Mr. Ajmone-Marsan. (March 4 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN,** with Robynne Redmon, Oksana Krovytska, Allan Glassman, and Mark Delavan; Joseph Colaneri. (March 5 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

**AMERICAN CHAMBER OPERA COMPANY**—A quartet of devilish musical-theatre works, fully staged: William Albright's "Seven Deadly Sins," Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," and the premières of Douglas Anderson's "Faust Triumphant" and George Zarr's "Who's on Faust?" (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. March 3-4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857. Through March 11.)

**AMATO OPERA COMPANY**—Opening performances of "Andrea Chénier." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. March 4 at 7:30 and March 5 at 2:30.)

**OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK**—Presenting a concert version of Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Tsar's Bride," with soprano Nuccia Focile, mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina, tenor Alexei Steblianko, baritone Sergei Leiferkus, and bass Paul Plishka; Eve Queler conducting. (Carnegie Hall. March 5 at 8.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**—Valery Gergiev conducts Mussorgsky's Suite from "Khovantchina" and his "Songs and Dances of Death" (featuring baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky), as well as Rimsky-Korsakov's Symphony No. 2 ("Antar"). (Avery Fisher Hall. March 2-4 at 8 and March 7 at 7:30.)

**VIENNA PHILHARMONIC**—At Carnegie Hall, Georg Solti conducting. March 3 at 8: The Prelude and "Liebestod" from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel," and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. . . . ¶ March 4 at 8: Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" (the 1911 version) and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. . . . ¶ March 5 at 2: Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" (the 1911 version) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

**COSMOPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**—Richard Westerfield conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with William Wolfram). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 4 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital beginning at 1 and open to ticket holders, the Cosmopolitan Chamber Ensemble will play Beethoven's Septet in E-Flat Major.)

**PHILHARMONIA VIRTUOSI**—Richard Kapp conducting Dmitri Klebanov's "Japanese Silhouettes" (featuring soprano Korliss Uecker and viola d'amore player Mela Tenenbaum), Schubert's A-Major Rondo and D-Major Konzertstück (both with Ms. Tenenbaum, playing violin), and Mozart's ballet music from "Idomeneo." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 4 at 7.)

**CITY ISLAND BAROQUE ENSEMBLE**—Performing Bach's Cantata No. 170 (featuring contralto Zehava Gal) and concertos by Vivaldi and Geminiani. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. March 5 at noon.)

**NEW YORK VIRTUOSI CHAMBER SYMPHONY**—Kenneth Klein conducts Joan Tower's "Island Prelude" for oboe and strings (featuring Richard Woodhams), Mendelssohn's Concerto for Piano, Violin, and String Orchestra (with pianist José Ramos Santana and violinist John Marcus), Dvořák's Serenade for Strings, and the première of Dorothy Lang's "Life Cycles" (featuring soprano Trudy Wallace). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 5 at 3.)

**I SOLISTI VENETI**—Performing Rossini's String Sonata No. 3, Antonino Pasculli's Oboe Concerto on Themes from Donizetti's "La Favorita," Giovanni Bottesini's Gran Duo Concertante for Violin and Double Bass, and four concertos by Vivaldi. Claudio Scimone conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 5 at 7:30.)

**Philadelphia Orchestra**—Charles Dutoit conducts Honegger's dramatic oratorio "Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher," with English supertitles. Joining the orchestra are the American Boychoir, the Philadelphia Singers Chorale, actress Julie Vincent (in the title role), sopranos Dominique Labelle and Deborah Voigt, mezzo-soprano Hélène Perraguin, tenor John Aler, baritone Philippe Rouillon, and (in various spoken roles) Guy Provost, Raymong Bouchard, and Kate Young. (Carnegie Hall. March 7 at 8.)

## RECITALS

**Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman Trio**—Performing piano trios by Haydn and Dvořák (the "Dumky"), as well as Schumann's Piano Quartet (with violist Paul Coletti assisting). (Bargemusic, Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. March 1 at 7. . . . Weill Recital Hall. March 4 at 2.) . . . ¶ March 5 at 3: The ensemble's violinist (Maria Bachmann) and pianist (Jon Klibonoff) perform violin sonatas by Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2), Bolcom (his Second), and Brahms (his Third), in addition to Copland's Nocturne. (Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island.) (For information about free tickets, which are recommended for all concerts, call 333-5200.)

**Kathleen Battle and Thomas Hampson**—The soprano and the baritone sing arias and duets from opera and Broadway, with John Nelson conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 1 at 8.)

**New York Woodwind Quintet and Raphael Trio**—The two chamber ensembles join forces for a program that ranges through a Mozart duo (for cello and bassoon), a Haydn flute trio, Beethoven's Quintet for Piano and Winds, Hindemith's "Kleine Kammermusik" (Op. 24, No. 2), and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 1 at 8.)

**Bargemusic**—Presenting string quartets by Haydn (in G Major, Op. 76, No. 1), Shostakovich (his Eighth), and Borodin (his Second); with violinists Nai-Yuan Hu and Ronald Hoogeveen, violist Paul Coletti, and cellist Christopher Costanza. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 2 at 7:30 and March 5 at 4.)

**Carlos Prieto and Ursula Oppens**—The cellist and the pianist perform solos and duets. The program includes Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 3 (with Mr. Prieto), Beethoven's E-Major Piano Sonata (Op. 14, No. 1, with Ms. Oppens), and chamber works by Manuel Ponce, Samuel Zyman, Silvestre Revueltas, and Astor Piazzolla. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. 249-8950. March 2 at 8.)

**Juilliard String Quartet**—The ensemble plays quartets by Bartók (his Second), Hindemith (his Fourth), and Beethoven (in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2). (Alice Tully Hall. March 4 at 3.)

**Yolanda Kondonassis**—In her New York-début recital, the harpist offers solo and chamber works by Scarlatti, Virgilio Mortari, Joseph Weigl (his Concertino for Harp and Woodwinds, written in 1815), Carlos Salzedo, Donald Erb (the première of his Harp Sonata), Ravel, Debussy, and Gershwin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 4 at 8.)

**Cuarteto Latinoamericano**—The Mexican foursome plays string quartets by Villa-Lobos (his Fifteenth), Gershwin ("Lullaby"), Mozart (in D Minor, K. 421), and Silvestre Revueltas (his Third). (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. March 5 at 2.)

**Shirley Verrett**—The soprano performs songs, arias, Broadway numbers, and spirituals; with pianist Warren George. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. March 5 at 2.)

**Vladimir Spivakov**—The violinist plays sonatas by Mozart (in G Major, K. 379) and Schnittke (his First), as well as Arvo Pärt's "Spiegel im Spiegel" and Schubert's C-Major Fantasy; with pianist Sergei Bezrodny. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 5 at 3.)

**Charles van Tassel**—Baritone, with pianist Marien van Nieukerken, performing Schubert's "Winterreise." Presented by the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. March 5 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-718 855-3053.)

**Music Before 1800 Productions**—Eight members of the Choir of Corpus Christi Church in a-cappella performances of Cipriano de Rore's "Passio Secundum Joannem" and motets by Philippe de Monte, with Louise Basbas directing. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. March 5 at 4.)

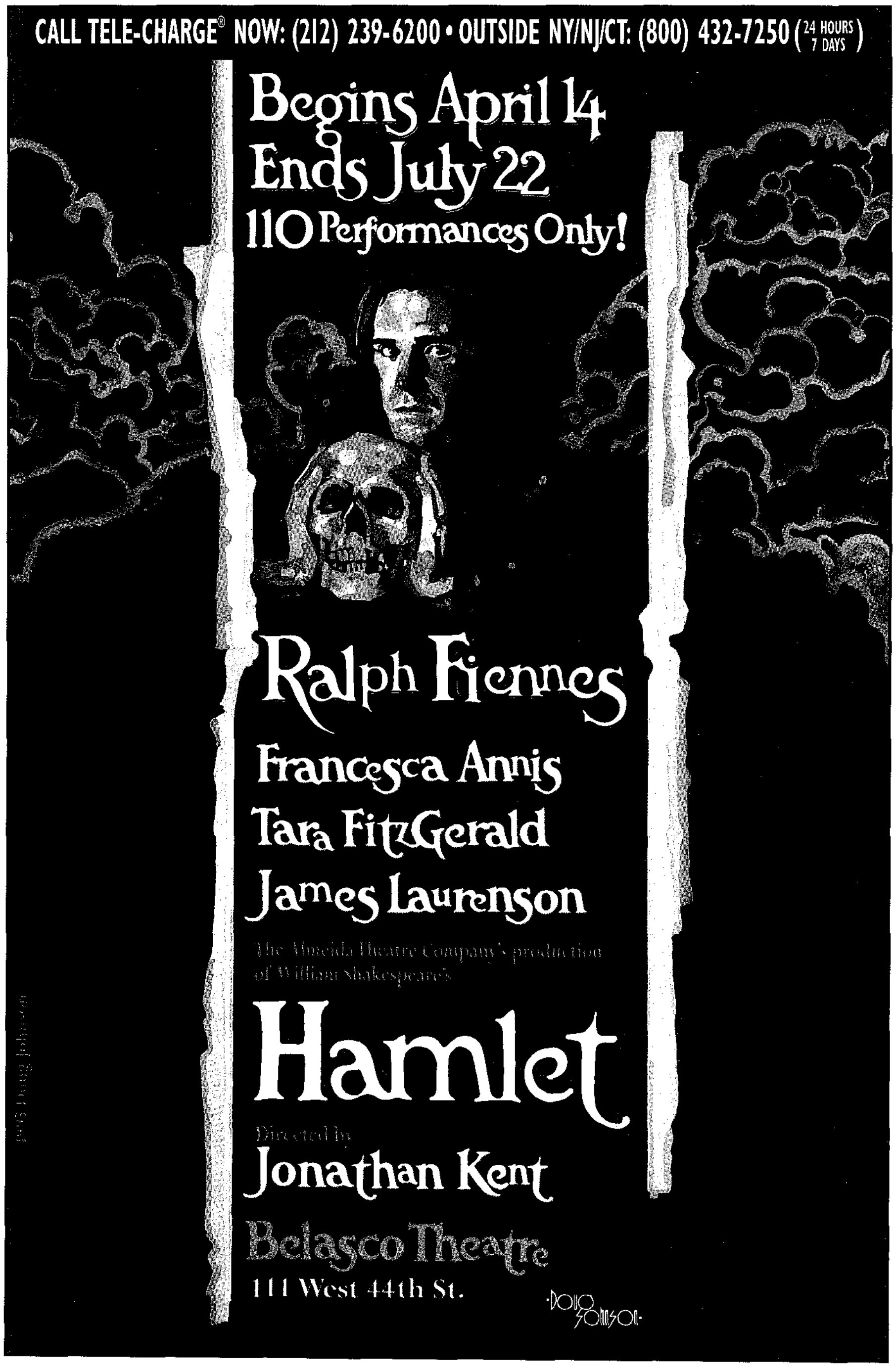
**New York Camerata**—The chamber group plays works by Bach, Anton Reicha, Scott Robbins, Ravel, and Mendelssohn (his C-Minor Piano Trio). (St. John's in the Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. March 5 at 4. For information about tickets, call 866-3459.)

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**—Presenting Schumann's Andante and Variations for Two Pianos, Two Cellos, and French Horn, and his Piano Quartet; Villa-Lobos's Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 (for eight cellos and soprano—in this case, Dawn Upshaw); and Harbison's "Between Two Worlds," for soprano, two cellos, and two pianos (again featuring Ms. Upshaw). (Alice Tully Hall. March 5 at 5 and March 7 at 7:30.)

**Salon Soirées**—Violinists Ya'akov Rubinstein and Michael Salm, violists Beatrice Muthelet and Ori Kam, and cellist Iris Regev perform two string quintets by Mozart, in a second-floor music room. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. March 5 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

**Ljuba Kazarnovskaya**—Soprano, performing Russian and Italian songs, with pianist Alla Brosterman. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 6 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

**Daniel Barenboim**—Performing Beethoven's Piano Sonatas in D Major (Op. 10, No. 3), C Major



### CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

(Op. 53, the "Waldstein"), and C Minor (Op. 111). (Carnegie Hall. March 6 at 8.)

**Julianne Baird and Concert Royal**—The soprano and the period-instrument players offer vocal chamber music by Purcell, Arne, and Handel. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 7 at 8.)

**Turtle Bay-thoven**—An all-Beethoven concert featuring musicians affiliated with the Turtle Bay Music School. The Meridian String Quartet plays the B-Flat-Major Quartet (Op. 18, No. 6), and tenor Scott Carlton (with pianist Brian Barclay) performs the composer's settings of Goethe poems. (244 E. 52nd St. 753-8811. March 7 at 7:30.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**A-Line Felines**—The annual cat show at Madison Square Garden began in 1895 under the sponsorship of society patronesses (Mrs. Stanford White, Mrs. J. J. Astor, et al.). This year's sponsoring patrons include Golden Cat (the official cat-show litter) and Iams Cat Food. The breeds have also changed: at the first show, the pageantry was divided among such mongrel categories as shorthaired she-cats, longhaired gelded cats, and, simply, toms. This weekend's varieties include bobtails, ocicats, Maine coons, Russian blues, and specialty cats bred for marcelled coats, folded ears, or apparent hairlessness (take a look at the photo of the sphynx, at right). Ailurophiles can study the forty breeds on display, listen to various lectures (by cat psychics, cat therapists, cat astrologers), or put their own pets to the test in contests for, say, longest whiskers or most beautiful eyes. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. March 3, from 3 to 9; March 4, from 10 to 6; and March 5, from 10 to 5.)

*The sphynx, one of forty breeds at the International Cat Show.*

BARRY MUNGER

**Bigger Digs**—The New York Flower Show doubles its acreage this year; happily, the tradition of divvying pier space into garden-size morsels endures. In addition to the more than thirty exhibits (bushland sanctuaries, potting sheds, children's weaving walls, urban rooftop gardens, and a twelve-foot-tall topiary Statue of Liberty), the show offers lectures—on kitchen gardens, native plants, container gardens, landscape pools, French roses—almost hourly throughout the four days of the show. (Piers 90 and 92, Twelfth Ave. near 50th St. March 2-4, from 10 to 9, and March 5, from 10 to 6. For information, call 686-6070.)

**Readings**—March 3 at 7: Former Pacific Islanders Susanna Moore (Hawaii) and Jessica Hagedorn (the Philippines) read from their novels. (New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 5 at 3: Poets Sheila Alson, Kathy Price, Clara Sala, and Cheryl Boyce-Taylor read their contributions to the anthology "Cayenne." (Brooklyn Moon Café, 745 Fulton St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 6 at 7:30: Donald Kagan and Donovan Webster read from their upcoming histories of war, discussing its origins (Kagan) and its aftermath (Webster). (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ March 6 at 8: Russell Banks, Allan Gurganus, Charles Johnson, and Marilynne Robinson read from their historical fiction and discuss the genre's mixture of fact and invention. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 6 at 8: Actors Paul Hecht and Lois Smith, among others, read selections from novels of the forties, including Mailer's "The Naked and the Dead," Shaw's "The Young Lions," and Kathleen Winsor's "Forever Amber." (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 7:30: J. M. McDonnell reads from her first novel, "Half Crazy." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

**Talks**—March 1 at 6: Susan Stamberg, who was a co-host of National Public Radio's "All

the rain makes everything clean.

and soft.

and smooth.

Things Considered" for fourteen years, delivers a talk titled "Talk, Talk, and More Talk." (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.) . . . ¶ March 2 at 6:30: Berkeley comparative literature professor Robert Alter examines the place of the Jew in modern intellectual life. (Leon Lowenstein Auditorium, 10 E. 66th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 6 at 6:30: Broadway-musical stars Marin Mazzie, Sarah Uriarte, and Karen Ziemba lead off the Women on Broadway series at the Winter Garden. (World Financial Center, Battery Park City. For information, call 945-0505.) . . . ¶ March 6 at 8:15: Choreographer Trisha Brown talks about her dance career with *Village Voice* critic Deborah Jowitt. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

**Walks**—March 4 at 1: Big Onion Walking Tours stops in Chinatown, the Lower East Side, Little Italy, and the downtown areas once called Little Germany, Little Ireland, and Little Africa. For information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ March 6 at 12:30: Architectural historian Francis Morrone, of the Municipal Art Society, circumambulates the grounds of Rockefeller Center. For more information, call 935-3960.

## FOR KIDS

*(Accompanied by parents or other adults.)*

**Barbie-san**—In connection with its exhibition "Ningyô: The Art of the Human Figurine," the Japan Society celebrates Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival), on March 4-5. During this holiday, families eat rice cakes, drink *sake*, and drag out their imperial-family dolls, complete with retinue and accessories, to place on *ningyô* platforms. The Japan Society has sponsored a dollmaking contest for area children; a selection of the award-winning entries will go on display starting March 1. During the weekend's festivities, girls and boys can participate in Kabuki dancing, learn origami, or watch the dollmakers ply their trade, and parents can sample the traditional drink *amazake*, a mixture of *sake* and rice malt. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. For a schedule of events, call 832-1155.)

**"Red Ridin' in the 'Hood"**—The terrifying fairy tale, transported from the forest to the concrete jungle and told from the wolf's point of view. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. March 4 at 2.)

**"The Tortoise and the Hare"**—These and other fabled beasts show up in Brooklyn, as part of Puppetworks' stage adaptation of three of Aesop's classic tales: "The Milkmaid and Her Pail," "Androcles and the Lion," and the title story. Morals included. (Puppetworks-Park Slope, 338 Sixth Ave., at 4th St. 1-718 965-6058. March 4-5 at 12:30 and 2:30.)

**"Pierrot & Pirouette"**—The story of Pierrot, a mime manqué, and Pirouette, a waitress/ballerina, and their search for love and fame, with Mark Stolzenberg (fire juggler, unicyclist, clown, etc.) and Stephanie Godino (of New York City Ballet, Donetsk Ballet, Cirque Gregoire, etc.). (Queens Theatre in the Park, New York State Pavilion, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. 1-718 760-0064. March 4 at 1.)

**"Don Pasquale"**—The Metropolitan Opera Guild presents an English version of Donizetti's opera buffa, in which a bass falls for a soprano who's in love with a tenor who's in cahoots with a baritone. (John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 59th St. March 4-5 at 2. For information about tickets, call 769-7008.)

**Silly Billy**—The Clown Prince lives up to his name, performing the magic and rev-'em-up comedy that have made him a legend with the birthday-party set. (West End Gate Children's Theatre, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. 662-8830. March 4 at 1:30.)

## SPORTS

### BOYS' CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL

**High-School Finals**—Hoop dreamers who can't land Knicks tickets take solace in the arrival of March, when New York is lush with championship basketball games you can actually attend. The city's top sixteen teams meet in the public-school tournament that begins on Thursday; the next day, the top-seeded Lincoln High Railsplitters play their first game, at the gym in Riverbank Park. The main attraction at Lincoln games is Stephon Marbury, a (knock on wood) future pro whose jump is so quick and so high that it looks like an idea—a sudden, startling, great idea. Marbury is averaging around twenty-eight points a game with such ideas. When he goes up to shoot, Lincoln High students yell the latest accolade, "water," perhaps because his long, arcing shots keep pouring in. Marbury graduates this year, and he has announced that he'll attend Georgia Tech, the same school that Queens native Kenny Anderson left—as a sophomore—for the N.B.A. As a pro, Marbury would play here at least once a year; as a student, his last chance comes this month. If the Railsplitters prevail, he'll have the chance to show his stuff when the city's two best teams meet in the finals, on March 18, at Madison Square Garden. (Preliminary games are played at Lehman College, in the Bronx; Elmcor, in Corona, Queens; and Riverbank State Park, on Riverside Dr. at 147th St. Tickets at the door on game days. For information about dates and tipoff times, call the Public School Athletic League, 1-718 694-9599, ext. 505.)

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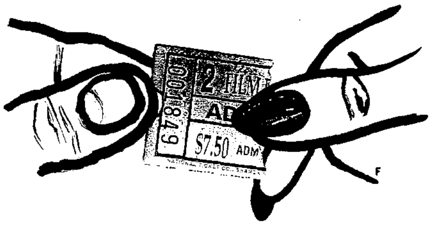

# THE MOVIES

## FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

**Exotica**—The Canadian writer-director Atom Egoyan's drama about the complicated lives of the patrons and employees of a strip club. With Bruce Greenwood, Mia Kirshner, Don McKellar, and Elias Koteas. Opening March 3. (Angelika Film Center.)

**Hideaway**—A man resuscitated from drowning (Jeff Goldblum) finds that his near-death experience has created a psychic link with a killer (Jeremy Sisto) who is after his wife (Christine Lahti) and daughter (Alicia Silverstone). With Alfred Molina. Directed by Brett Leonard. Written by Andrew Kevin Walker and Neal Jimenez, from Dean R. Koontz's 1992 novel. Opening March 3. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks**—An experimental documentary about racism, modelled on Dante's "Inferno." Co-written and co-directed by Camille Billops (who is the movie's Virgil) and James V. Hatch. With appearances by Ollie Harrington, Delilah Jackson, and George C. Wolfe. Opening March 3. (Little Theatre.)

**The Mangler**—A horror movie about malevolent commercial laundry equipment, starring Robert Englund (Freddy Krueger in the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series). Directed by Tobe Hooper; screenplay by Hooper, Stephen Brooks, and Peter Welbeck, from a short story by Stephen King. Opening March 3. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

**Man of the House**—A comedy in which Chevy Chase's advances toward Farrah Fawcett are thwarted by her eleven-year-old son (Jonathan Taylor Thomas). Directed by James Orr, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jim Cruickshank from a story by David Peckinpah and Richard Jeffries. Opening March 3. (Village Theatre VII, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, and Embassy 1.)

**Mina Tannenbaum**—Writer-director Martine Dugowson's feature follows a quarter-century-long friendship between two Jewish women (Romane Bohringer and Elsa Zylberstein) in Paris. With Florence Thomassin. In French. Opening March 3. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**Roommates**—Peter Falk plays an old man living with the grandson he raised (D. B. Sweeney), who is now a married doctor with a family. With Julianne Moore and Ellen Burstyn. Directed by Peter Yates. Written by Max Apple and Stephen Metcalfe, from Apple's 1994 memoir. Opening March 3. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, and Guild.)

**Super 8 ½**—A faux documentary shot in black-and-white 16 mm, written and directed by its star, Bruce La Bruce ("No Skin Off My Ass"), about an alcoholic ex-porn star with plans for a comeback. Opening March 3. (Cinema Village.)

**The Wild Bunch**—A reissue of Sam Peckinpah's 1969 film—widely regarded as his masterpiece—that includes ten minutes of restored footage. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening March 3. (Lincoln Square.)

## CURRENT FILMS

*(The signed notes are by Whitney Balliett, Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are on page 31.)*

**Before Sunrise**—Richard Linklater's third movie is provocatively plotless. Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Céline (Julie Delpy) meet on a train, decide to get off together, and have themselves a fine, sleepless time before parting the next day. That's it: various threats loom up and fade away, and the only suspense comes from wondering whether the two characters (who are pretty much the only characters) will stop talking long enough to have sex. The charm—the midsummer enchantment—never feels forced; it steals up and wins you. A true romance.—A.L. (1/30/94) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

**Before the Rain**—A drama set in Macedonia and London, about three sets of characters who seem to lead unrelated lives but who discover the opposite. With Katrin Cartlidge, Rade Serbedzija, Gregoire Colin, and Labina Mitevska. Written and directed by Milcho Manchevski. In Macedonian and English. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**Billy Madison**—A comedy in which Adam Sandler, of "Saturday Night Live," must repeat grades one through twelve in six months before his father will give him control of the family's hotel empire. With

*Temuera Morrison and Rena Owen in "Once Were Warriors."*

TIM BOWER

Bridgette Wilson. Written by Sandler and Tim Herlihy. Directed by Tamra Davis. (59th Street East Cinema, Art Greenwich Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

**Boys on the Side**—In this semi-comic tearjerker, three seemingly incompatible women—a salty gay singer (Whoopi Goldberg), a young, restless beauty (Drew Barrymore), and an ailing career gal (Mary-Louise Parker)—bond on the run and settle down in Tucson. Earthy, Sexy, and Sickly create a nontraditional family; men damage or frustrate them. The token male happiness-maker, a cop who woos Barrymore, is so sweet and slow that you half expect him to compare life to a box of chocolates. Herbert Ross directed, from a script by Don Roos.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

**The Brady Bunch Movie**—There's a cardboard plot involving Michael McKean as an evil real-estate developer, but really this is a relaxed, hit-or-miss eighty-nine-minute skit. Gary Cole stands out as A Man Named Brady, a sweet optimist forever dispensing officious advice and nonsensical proverbs, but the three daughters—Christine Taylor as perfect, bitchy Marcia (updated with a lesbian admirer), Olivia Hack as lisping Cindy, and Jennifer Elise Cox as tortured Jan, the poster girl of adolescent neurosis—steal the show. Shelley Long, the most inevitable casting choice of the year, has surprisingly little to do as Carol. Directed by Betty Thomas.—S.K. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Waverly, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through March 2. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting March 3.)

**Bullets Over Broadway**—A nicely structured piece of silliness from Woody Allen, set in the theatre world of the nineteen-twenties. John Cusack is the Woody substitute, an earnest young playwright who needs to discover an existence beyond the stage; Chazz Palminteri shines as the taciturn gangster who swaps places with him, becoming as ruthless in his aesthetics as he is with a gun. Around this neat switch Allen assembles a crowd of near-caricatures—opportunities for Dianne Wiest, Jim Broadbent, Jennifer Tilly, and others to show their stuff.—A.L. (10/24/94) (34th St. East, Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**Forrest Gump**—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Columbus Circle, and Criterion Center.)

**A Great Day in Harlem**—A funny, moving, altogether miraculous documentary about how fifty-eight famous, near-famous, and not yet famous jazz musicians came to be photographed by Art Kane for *Esquire* in front of a brownstone on East 126th Street one morning in August of 1958. The movie, just under an hour long, is a mercurial mix of brief interviews with Kane and with musicians and bystanders who were at the shoot (only a dozen or so survive); alternate exposures (Kane took a hundred and twenty); various stills; an 8-mm. movie taken by Milt Hinton's wife, Mona; and sequences from the brilliant "Sound of Jazz" television special, which had aired just six months earlier and included many of the same musicians. The inspiration of Charles Graham, the film was produced by Jean Bach and Matthew Seig, and edited by Susan Peehl, who manages, by ingeniously juggling Kane's shots and Hinton's movie, to make you think you're standing on 126th Street in 1958. On the same bill is Gjon Mili's classic—and pardonably arty—jazz short, "Jammin' the Blues," made in 1944 with Lester Young, Harry Edison, Illinois Jacquet, and Sid Catlett.—W.B. (Reviewed in the Jazz column, 1/23/95.) (Quad Cinema.)

**Heavyweights**—Ben Stiller plays a fitness-camp martinet whose corpulent teen-age wards seize power. With Aaron Schwartz, Tom Hodges, Shaun Weiss, and Tom McGowan. Directed by Steven Brill, who shares script credit with Judd Apatow. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Embassy; through March 2.)

**Hoop Dreams**—An engrossing documentary about two inner-city Chicago teen-agers, William Gates and Arthur Agee, who aspire to careers in professional basketball. The filmmakers—Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert—follow them all the way through high school. In the course of the movie's patient, sympathetic narrative (the running time is close to three hours), our reaction to the heroes' progress changes decisively, and for the better: at first we're assessing their chances, measuring them for N.B.A. uniforms; by the end we're rooting for them simply to survive the process without losing all their exuberance and drive and creative spirit.—T.R. (10/17/94) (Baronet, Quad Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

**The Hunted**—Christopher Lambert is a businessman in Japan who finds himself pursued by an assassin (John Lone) after he witnesses the murder of a young woman (Joan Chen). Written and directed by Jonathan Lawton. (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, Olympia, and National Twin.)

**Just Cause**—Sean Connery is an icy Harvard law professor and capital-punishment opponent drafted to spring Blair Underwood from death row, and Laurence Fishburne is the corrupt small-town policeman in his way. Two or three times, the actors trick you into thinking that this thriller means to grapple with white liberal guilt, but the director, Arne Glimcher, quickly chucks the dilemma they've set up. The replacement: a ridiculous racist revenge plot climaxing in an alligator-ridden swamp in the Everglades. Among the many garish stereotypes here is Ed Harris, in a cheeseball performance as a white-trash Hannibal Lecter. Screenplay by Jeb Stuart and Peter Stone, based on the novel by John Katzenbach.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

**Lamb**—This 1985 Irish drama, directed by Colin Gregg, stars a young Liam Neeson as a Catholic lay brother at a reform school who absconds with an abused ten-year-old epileptic (Hugh O'Conor). Written by Bernard MacLaverty, from his 1980 novel. (Quad Cinema.)

**Legends of the Fall**—Edward Zwick's film, based on Jim Harrison's brawny novella, is a father-and-sons saga, in which three handsome brothers (Brad Pitt, Aidan Quinn, Henry Thomas) compete for the approval of a stern patriarch (Anthony Hopkins). It gets sillier as it goes. Halfway through, Pa suffers a stroke, and Hopkins' performance turns into a mad music-hall impersonation of a peg-leg pirate. His outrageous scenery-chewing reveals the movie's true nature: it's the Monty Python version of "Bonanza." Also with Julia Ormond.—T.R. (1/9/95) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and Lincoln Square.)

**Little Women**—Gillian Armstrong's movie is more naturalistic—less storybooklike—than the previous screen versions of Louisa May

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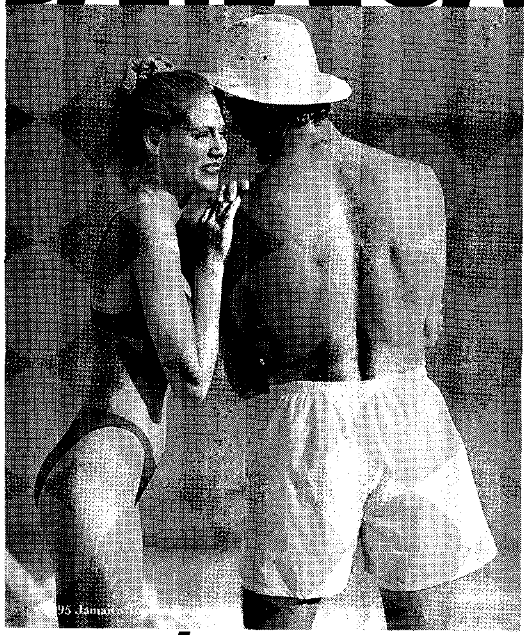

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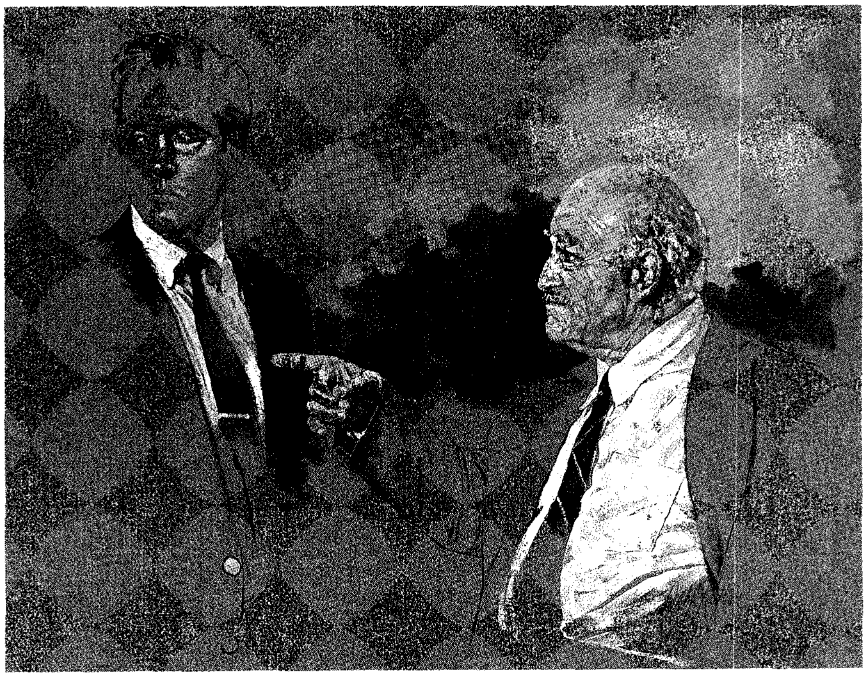
Alcott's novel about a poor but noble New England family in the eighteen-sixties. In this rendering, the Marches—mother, father (mostly absent), and four daughters—inhabit a coherent, fully realized world. Winona Ryder, as the aspiring writer Jo, gives a luminous performance. Also with Susan Sarandon, Trini Alvarado, Claire Danes, Kirsten Dunst, Samantha Mathis, Christian Bale, Gabriel Byrne, and Mary Wickes.—T.R. (1/9/95) (Chelsea Cinemas and Cinema 3.)



*Opening March 3, D. B. Sweeney and Peter Falk in "Roommates."*

DAHL TAYLOR

**The Madness of King George**—Alan Bennett's stage play has moved to the screen, with the same star (Nigel Hawthorne), the same director (Nicholas Hytner), and the same story, about the King of England's decline, in the years 1788-89, from cheerful disciplinarian to lewd, unsleeping ranter. It's a fine dramatic predicament—and that's how it stays, never really pressing forward or pulling us into a plot. But there is plenty of relish here—in Ian Holm's fierce turn as a country physician, and in Hawthorne's blend of thundering and whimpers. With Helen Mirren (underused) and Rupert Everett (overweight).—A.L. (1/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Coronet, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**Meet the Feebles**—With a cast of fornicating, litigating, and hallucinating life-size animal puppets, this 1989 comedy by the New Zealand director Peter Jackson—a predecessor to his current "Heavenly Creatures"—promises to make the Muppets sit up and take notice. (Film Forum; through March 7.)

**Miami Rhapsody**—Gwyn (Sarah Jessica Parker) loves Matt (Gil Bellows)—only she's not sure. Her mom (Mia Farrow) loves a young male nurse (Antonio Banderas)—only she's not sure, either; maybe she really loves Gwyn's dad (Paul Mazursky). And so forth. David Frankel wrote and directed this comedy, which sounds like a lot of fun but somehow manages to be hardly any fun at all.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

**Nobody's Fool**—Paul Newman plays Sully, a divorced, erratically employed construction worker in a dingy upstate New York town. Robert Benton's movie (based on a novel by Richard Russo) is essentially a series of low-key comic vignettes in which the hero tries to deal with the exasperating presence of other people: irritable neighbors, demanding friends, disappointed family members. Not much happens, but the picture bobs along amiably to the rhythm of Newman's dry, deeply funny performance, and the tiny pleasures accumulate like the snow that covers the town. The terrific supporting cast includes Bruce Willis, Melanie Griffith, Jessica Tandy, and Gene Saks.—T.R. (34th Street Showplace, Tower East, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Guild; through March 2.)

**Once Were Warriors**—A fictional account of a Maori family in present-day New Zealand. Directed by Lee Tamahori. Written by Riwia Brown, from Alan Duff's 1990 novel. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

**Pulp Fiction**—In Quentin Tarantino's celebrated picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 57th Street Playhouse, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

**The Quick and the Dead**—Sharon Stone dons leather pants and packs a six-gun in a Western directed by Sam Raimi. With Gene Hackman, Russell Crowe, and Leonardo DiCaprio. Written by Simon Moore. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

**Quiz Show**—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. It hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema; through March 2.)

**Red**—The last and best film in the trilogy that began with the baffling "Blue" and continued with the more acrid "White"; here all the skills of the director, Krzysztof Kieślowski, are brought into melancholy play. Blind chance or benign fate (according to your point of view) brings Valentine (Irène Jacob), a young model living alone in Geneva, into contact with a retired judge (Jean-Louis Trintignant) with a predilection for eavesdropping on telephone conversations. In time Valentine's repulsion shades into curiosity, and from there into affection. And the movie itself shades from coldness and contrivance into a story as touching and mysterious as anything Kieślowski has ever made. In French.—A.L. (11/28/94) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**Sankofa**—A model (Oyafunmike Ogunlano) on a photo shoot in West Africa is hurled back in time to the era of slavery, in a film written and directed by Haile Gerima. (Thalia.)

**Sarraounia**—The Mauritanian writer-director Med Hondo's epic, about a late-nineteenth-century tribal queen (Ai Keïta) who defends her people during the French conquest of West Africa. With Jean-Roger Milo, Feodor Atkine, and Didier Sauvegrain. In French. (Thalia.)

**The Secret of Roan Inish**—John Sayles' fable about a mythological Celtic creature, the Selkie (half seal, half human), and its effect on an Irish family unfolds as a tall tale, and it offers the pleasures of a magical story told in mysterious tones. The movie begins as a rousing sea adventure, then turns into a home-and-hearth mood piece; what saves it from being cloying is an almost total lack of drama. The rhythms are placid and the camera work (by Haskell Wexler) is simple and unfussy. The film's a charm.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

**Shallow Grave**—This claustrophobic chamber piece, set mostly in a Scottish apartment, poses an old Hitchcock question—what's the best way to lose a dead body?—and comes up with some fresh and bloody answers. Kerry Fox, Ewan McGregor, and Christopher Eccleston are the three roommates confronted by the corpse of their new lodger and the stash of drug money that he has left behind. They do the obvious thing (obvious, at any rate, according to the juicy amoral standards that prevail here): they bury the body and keep the cash. Greed and paranoia soon kick in, and the plot, smartly worked out by screenwriter John Hodge, marches toward its climax. Not that you care too much how it ends up or what happens to these people—the film is less a thriller than a frosty exercise in logic. But the director, Danny Boyle, does wonders with a small budget, and the suave, dense-hued look of his movie stays with you long after the horror has evaporated.—A.L. (2/13/95) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

**The Shawshank Redemption**—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment in the nineteen-forties. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companionship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. The picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

**Through the Olive Trees**—One actor stands in for the director and the other members of the cast play themselves, in a drama by the Iranian writer-director Abbas Kiarostami, about a film that he (and they) made in earthquake-ravaged northern Iran. In Farsi. (Village East Cinemas.)

**The Walking Dead**—Four African-American marines (Allen Payne, Eddie Griffin, Joe Morton, and Vonte Sweet) fight their way through the jungle during the Vietnam War, in an action film written and directed by Preston A. Whitmore II. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**Window to Paris**—Yuri Mamin's comic fantasy about St. Petersburg roommates (Serguei Dontsov and Victor Michailov) who discover a window in their apartment that opens onto the City of Light. With Agnes Soral. Written by the director and Arkadi Tigai. In Russian and French. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

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### EAST SIDE

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
**Little Theatre,** Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
**Movieland 8th Street Triplex,** 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
**Village Theatre VII,** 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
**Village East Cinemas,** 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
**19th Street East 6,** B'way at 19th (260-8000).
**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
**34th Street Showplace,** 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
**34th St. East,** 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
**Eastside Playhouse,** 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
**Sutton 1 and 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
**Gotham Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
**Plaza,** 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
**Manhattan Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
**Baronet and Coronet,** 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
**Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue,** 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
**Gemini 1 and 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
**Beekman,** 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
**New York Twin,** 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
**68th St. Playhouse,** 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
**Tower East,** 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
**East 85th Street,** 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
**Orpheum VII,** 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
**86th Street East Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

### WEST SIDE

**Film Forum,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
**Waverly 1 and 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
**Art Greenwich Twin,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
**23rd St. West Triplex,** 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
**Guild,** 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
**Carnegie Hall Cinemas,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
**Angelika 57,** 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
**Columbus Circle,** B'way at 61st (247-5070).
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
**Regency,** B'way at 67th (724-3700).
**Lincoln Square,** B'way at 68th (336-5000).
**84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th (877-3600).
**Thalia,** B'way at 95th (316-4962).
**Metro Cinema 1 and 2,** B'way at 99th (222-1200).
**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th (865-8128).

### TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th (354-0900).
**Embassy 1,** B'way at 46th (302-0494).
**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
**National Twin,** B'way at 44th (869-0950).

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MOSCHINO

## REVIVALS

*(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)*

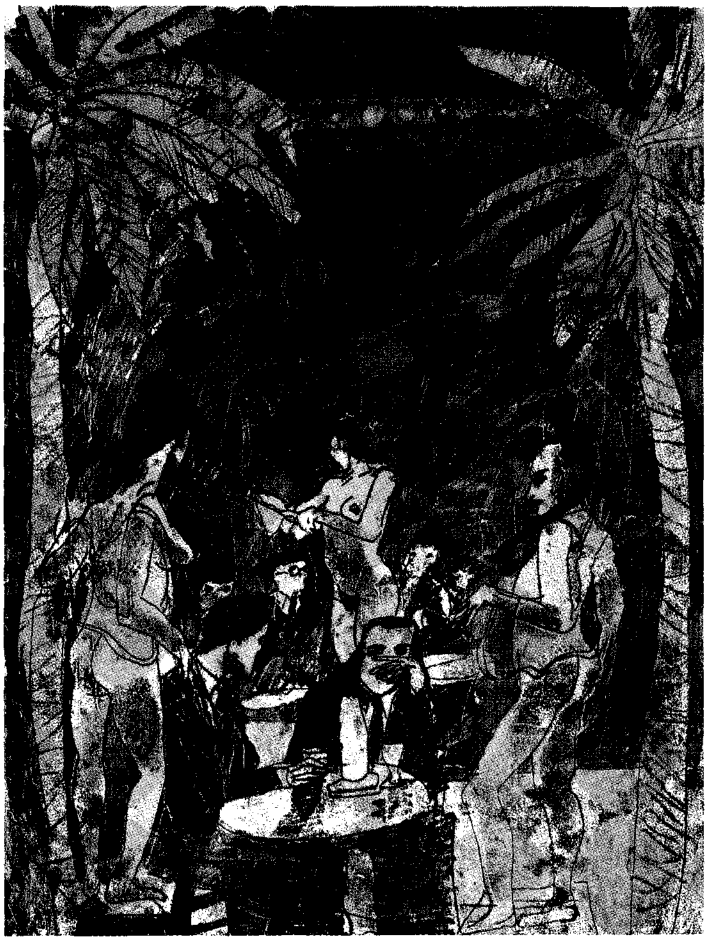
**Battling Butler** (1926)—Rarely seen Buster Keaton film that he sometimes said was his favorite but that is probably no one else's favorite; the story is slight enough to hang gags on (including a famous duck shoot), but there's some discomfort—almost masochism—built into it. Keaton plays puny, defenseless Alfy Butler, a rich, soft simpleton whose father sends him into the woods to make a man of him; through love (for broad-faced Sally O'Neil) and mistaken identity, he becomes embroiled in prizefighting and is pitted against the sadistic world champion. He wins, of course, but not until after he's taken a cruel beating. Keaton directed, and there are cleverly worked-out compositional techniques, including the sort of deep focus that was later to be associated with Orson Welles and Gregg Toland. With Snitz Edwards as the valet. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 5-6.)

**Boyz N the Hood** (1991)—The writer and director John Singleton was a twenty-three-year-old graduate of the U.S.C. film school when he made his first movie, a classically constructed—and therefore rather predictable—coming-of-age drama about young black men growing up on the mean streets of south-central Los Angeles. His evocation of real people's struggles to find some measure of peace and sanity in grim urban circumstances is heartfelt and often moving, and the movie provides a welcome corrective to the dehumanizing sensationalism of the local-news version of inner-city life. But the plot is disappointingly conventional; it obeys screenwriting-class rules. The experience that Singleton is dealing with here deserves something more than the tidy dramatic structure that he has imposed on it. We get glimpses of what the movie might have been in the complex, magnetic performance of Ice Cube, a rap star (formerly of N.W.A.), who plays a neighborhood gangster type named Doughboy. Also with Cuba Gooding, Jr., Larry Fishburne, Nia Long, Tyra Ferrell, and Angela Bassett.—T.R. (Whitney Museum; March 2.)

**College** (1927)—A beautiful little comedy. Buster Keaton is a bookworm, working his way through college and determined to become a star athlete. The story line isn't as miraculously fresh as in a couple of his films, but it allows for some of his most startlingly inventive stunts. Despite the many pilferings from this film (it has been a gold mine for other comedians), the routines are executed so precisely and with such an air of confident innocence that they are charged with surprise—and probably will be forever. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 3-4.)

**Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!** (1965)—Killer-female mayhem. The antiheroines (including Lori Williams and Haji) are bosomy go-go dancers and sports-car freaks, led by Tura Satana, a greedy man-hater with a mean karate chop. Soon they're hauling around a male stiff and a female hostage, and plotting to rip off a sexually demented desert miser. A highlight of what Russ Meyer called his "drive-in period," this rabid Z movie stretches double-entendres into warped figure eights and offers some truly delicious bizarro strokes.—M.S. (Film Forum 3.)

**The Godfather** (1972)—A wide, startlingly vivid view of a Mafia dynasty, in which organized crime becomes an obscene nightmare image of American free enterprise. The movie is a popular melodrama with its roots in the gangster films of the thirties, but it expresses a new tragic realism, and it's altogether extraordinary. Francis Ford Coppola directed. Marlon Brando is Don Vito Corleone, with Al Pacino, John Cazale, James Caan, and Talia Shire as his children. The cast includes Robert Duvall, Richard Castellano as Clemenza, and Diane Keaton. The script, credited to Mario Puzo and Coppola, is based on Puzo's best-seller. (The film runs just under three hours; the period is 1945 to the mid-fifties.)—P.K. (American Musem of the Moving Image; March 4.)



*Opening March 3, Atom Egoyan's "Exotica."*

**Mamma Roma** (1962)—In Pier Paolo Pasolini's over-conceptualized second film, Anna Magnani (who else?) plays Mamma Roma, a former prostitute with a heart as big, and goals as confused, as the whole Eternal City. Pasolini both admires and questions the woman's determination to push her teen-age son into the middle class: she puts her street smarts at the service of false values. The director's Marxist-Catholic imagery reaches its heavy-handed nadir when, in prison, the son is strapped to the *letto di contenzione* ("punishment bed"). As photographed by the great Tonino Delli Colli, it makes for one fancy crucifixion. In Italian.—M.S. (Film Forum 3.)

**Of Mice and Men** (1939)—When Lewis Milestone prefaced the credits of his version of the John Steinbeck play and novel with George (Burgess Meredith) and Lennie (Lon Chaney, Jr.) fleeing a posse, he was, no doubt, aiming for economy and tension. He couldn't have guessed that he was starting a new vogue, and that it would become almost standard practice for a film's action to precede the credit information even when the action made no particular sense as a prologue. The story, about the friendship between two lonely, vagrant ranch hands—the small, bedraggled, intelligent George and the simpleminded giant Lennie—is gimmicky and highly susceptible to parody, but it is emotionally effective just the same. The film was beautifully put together, and has a fine Aaron Copland score. Betty Field's silly, vain, hapless Mae is a small acting classic, and the cowboy star Bob Steele is amazingly good as her sadistic husband, Curley. With Leigh Whipper, memorable as the lean, bitter Crooks (an unjolly black man), and Charles Bickford.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; March 7.)

**Scene of the Crime** (1987)—This moody provincial soap opera with thriller convolutions is largely an exercise in style by the gifted director André Téchiné—but it's a dazzling style and there's real feeling in it. Catherine Deneuve, in perhaps her warmest and most skillful performance, plays a divorced country woman who falls in love with a young escaped convict (Wadeck Stanczak). As anyone who's ever seen a Jean Gabin melodrama from the thirties will know immediately, their affair is doomed. The fatalistic mood is familiar, the plot is absurdly intricate, yet Téchiné's direction—mixing self-conscious homage to old movies with unself-conscious love of the landscape and the characters—gives the movie an unsettling and seductive pull. In French.—T.R. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 3.)

**Speak Easily** (1932)—Buster Keaton is still the name above the title, but his co-star, Jimmy Durante, dominates their second team-up. It lacks a single sustained funny sequence. Keaton plays a naïve professor who brings an amateurish travelling show to Broadway; Durante is the troupe's comedian. Keaton knew why M-G-M's shotgun marriage of Schnozzola and the Great Stone Face couldn't work: "Durante just can't keep quiet," he complained later. "He's going to talk no matter what." Keaton seems depressed, and in the movie's slapstick set piece, which has the professor continually stumbling onstage on opening night, Durante actually gets more laughs. With Thelma Todd as a gold-digger and Ruth Selwyn as a nice chorine. Edward Sedgwick directed; the screenwriters, Ralph Spence and Laurence E. Johnson, adapted a story by Clarence Budington Kelland.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; starting March 7.)

**Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home** (1986)—Things are fairly comatose in space, and you may start feeling passive and depressed, but then the seven crewmates travel from the 23rd century back to 20th-century San Francisco to save a pair of humpback whales, and the encounters there between the seven and the more primitive San Franciscans allow for a few modest jokes. William Shatner's Kirk is less stoic here than in III—he's pleasantly daffy. The others in the crew also have an easy, parodistic tone. But the picture doesn't have much beyond the interplay among them and the jokey scenes in San Francisco. Directed by Leonard Nimoy.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 4-5.)

## LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves. (246-1583)—"Junior" (Ivan Reitman). . . . "Interview with the Vampire" (Neil Jordan). . . . "Far from Home: The Adventures of Yellow Dog” (Phillip Borsos). . . . “Speechless” (Ron Underwood). . . . “Eat Drink Man Woman” (Ang Lee; in Mandarin). . . . “The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert” (Stephan Elliott). . . . “Death and the Maiden” (Roman Polanski).

**Film Forum 2 and 3,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** A festival of Buster Keaton films, an early celebration of his hundredth birthday (the actual date is October 4). March 1: “Sidewalks of New York” (1931, Jules White and Zion Myers) and “The Passionate Plumber” (1932, Edward Sedgwick). . . . March 2: “Estrellados” (1930, Sedgwick), the Spanish language version of “Free and Easy,” and three short films Keaton made in 1938. . . . March 3-4: “College” (†) and three short films—“The Love Nest” (1923), “The Scarecrow” (1920), and “The Goat” (1921). . . . March 5-6: “Battling Butler” (†) and “The Saphead” (1920, Herbert Blanche). . . . From March 7: “Speak Easily” (†) and four short films with Keaton and Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle. . . . ¶ March 6 (evenings only): A program of two-reels starring Will Rogers, Billy Bevan, Sally Eilers, Carole Lombard, Lupino Lane, and Mabel Normand. . . . **THEATRE 3:** “Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!” (†) and “Mamma Roma” (†).

**Little Theatre,** Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-1717)—Through March 2: “The Cow” (1993, Karel Kachyna; in Czech). . . . ¶ From March 3: “The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks” (Camille Billops and James V. Hatch).

**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through March 2: “Sex, Drugs & Democracy” (Jonathan Blank). . . . ¶ From March 3: “Super 8 ½” (Bruce La Bruce).

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The museum will be showing the five films nominated for Academy Awards in the documentary-feature category on March 2-3 at 2:30, 6, and 8 and March 4-5 at 2 and 5. . . . The five films nominated for Academy Awards in the foreign-film category on March 6-7 at 2:30 and 6. . . . ¶ March 2 at 6: “The Quiet One” (1949, Sidney Myers), a documentary. . . . ¶ March 3 at 6:30: A program of short films by Emily and Faith Hubley, who will be present. . . . ¶ March 4-5 at 2:30 and 5: Two different programs of short films shown last year at the Hiroshima, Japan, animated-film festival. . . . ¶ March 6 at 6:30: Animated films by Bill Morrison, who will be present. . . . ¶ March 7 at 6: “Of Mice and Men” (†).

**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of recent French films selected by the editors and critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma*. March 1 at 2: “Joan the Maid, Part II: The Prisons” (1993, Jacques Rivette). . . . March 1 at 5:15 and March 4 at 4:15 and 8: “Portrait of a Girl” (1994, Chantal Akerman) and “USA Go Home” (1994, Claire Denis). . . . March 1 at 7:45 and March 4 at 6:45 and 10:20: “Travolta and Me” (1993, Patricia Mazuy). . . . March 2 at 8: “Nana” (1926, Jean Renoir). . . . March 3 at 2, 6, and 10: “Scene of the Crime” (†). . . . March 3 at 4 and 8: “My Life and Times with Antonin Artaud” (1993, Gérard Mordillat). . . . March 5 at 4:15 and 8:30: “The Innocents” (1988, André Téchiné). . . . March 5 at 6:15: “I Don't Kiss” (1992, Téchiné). . . . ¶ March 4-5 at 2: “Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home” (†).

**Whitney Museum,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—The final programs in a series of films and videos by, or about, black American males. March 1 at noon: “To Sleep with Anger” (1990, Charles Burnett). . . . March 1 at 3:30: “School Daze” (1988, Spike Lee) and an episode of “Frank's Place.”. . . March 2 at 2: “Boyz N the Hood” (†), an episode of “Roc,” and music videos by Snoop Doggy Dogg. . . . March 2 at 5:30: “Tongues Untied” (1989, Marlon Riggs) and an episode of “Roc.”. . . March 3 at noon: “Passin' It On” (1992, John Valadez and Peter Miller) and an episode of “The Cosby Show.”. . . March 4 at 2: “In Search of Our Fathers” (1992, Maro Williams) and an episode of “The Cosby Show.”. . . March 4 at 5:30: A mixed bag of television shows. . . . March 5 at noon: “Menace II Society” (1993, Albert Hughes and Allen Hughes) and “Fade to Black” (1990, Tony Cokes and Donald Trammel). . . . March 5 at 3:30: Another mixed bag of television shows.

**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—March 4 at 2: “The Godfather” (†). . . . ¶ March 5 at 2: “The Little Princess” (1939, Walter Lang), with Shirley Temple. . . . March 5 at 4: “Stowaway” (1937, William A. Seiter), with Temple.

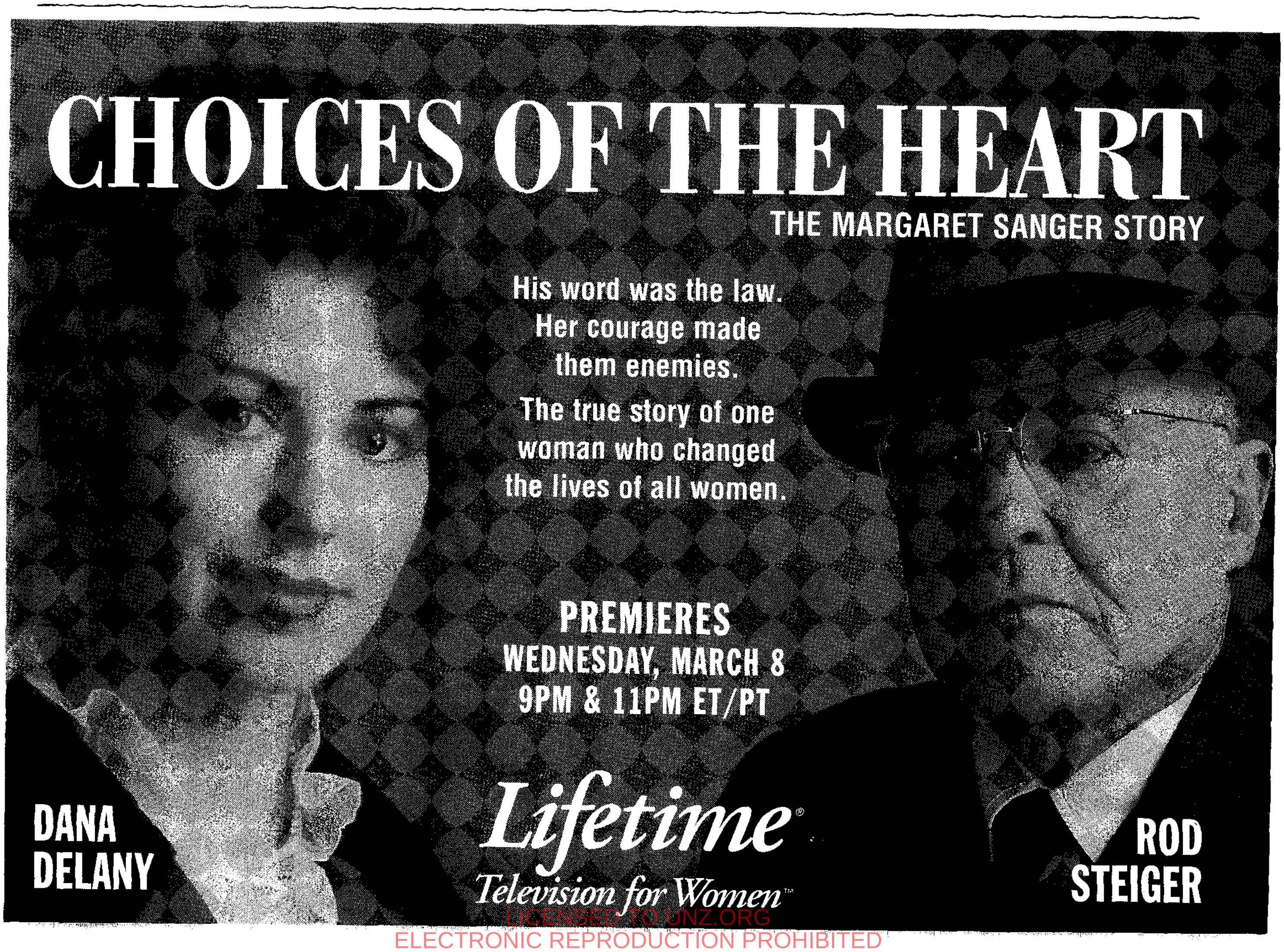
**Donnell Library Center,** 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—March 7 at noon: “The Gay Divorcée” (1934, Mark Sandrich), with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

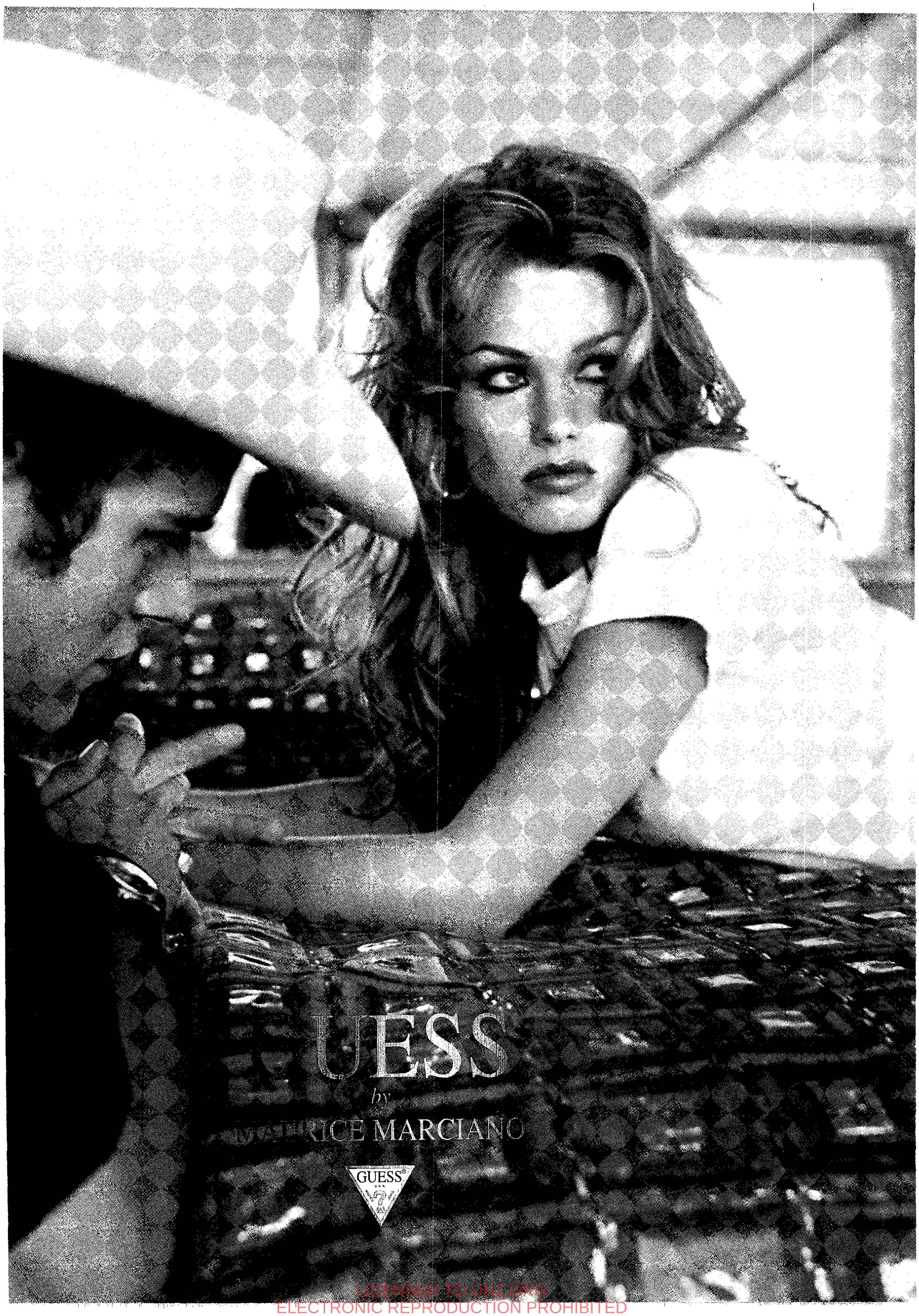
**A Different Light Bookstore,** 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On March 5 at 7, the feature will be “The Third Sex” (1957).

**Florence Gould Hall,** 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 7 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: “À la Mode” (1993, Rémy Duchemin; in French).

**Brooklyn Museum,** 200 Eastern Parkway (1-718 638-5000)—A program of new Italian films. March 3 at 7: “The Red Dove” (1989, Nanni Moretti). . . . ¶ March 4 at 2: “Manila Paloma Blanca” (1993, Daniele Segre) and “Dinamite—Nuraxi Figus, Italia” (1994, Segre). . . . ¶ March 4 at 7: “The Robber of Children” (1991, Gianni Amelio).

**City University of New York,** 33 W. 42nd St. (529-1955)—On March 4, from 11 A.M. to 9:30 P.M., the ninth annual City Lore festival, this year concentrating on films and videos about the beginnings of entertainment in the United States.

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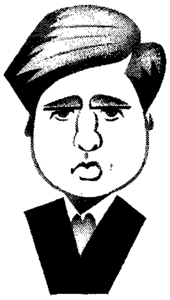
THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## A RECOVERING DWEEBY WHITE GUY



Not long ago, Michael Lind was all set to become one of those conservative Washington power intellectuals—the kind who wear bow ties and hold forth on the Sunday-morning talk shows about family values and a stable currency. While he was still in his twenties, he served in the Bush Administration; was executive editor of *The National Interest*, the weighty neoconservative foreign-policy journal; and went sailing with his good friend and mentor William F. Buckley, Jr. But last summer, after having something of an epiphany, Lind packed his bags, left the conservative movement for good, and took a job in New York as a senior editor at *Harper's*. Now, suddenly, Lind, who is thirty-two, seems to be everywhere—the true believer turned apostate, publicly and boisterously defying his old comrades on the right. "Did you see 'Godfather III'? I'm Andy Garcia," is how he puts it, referring to Don Corleone's mutinous nephew.

It all began with an article last month in the *New York Review of Books*, in which Lind accused the conservative movement of cozying up to the Reverend Pat Robertson, a man whose 1991 book, Lind dryly pointed out, depicts Jews as key figures in a cabal of European bankers and Freemasons responsible for the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. After the Robertson article, the *National Review*, in an editorial, speculated that Lind had been captured by the liberal establishment. Lind quickly responded, in *The New Republic*, with a satirical piece about his induction into a secret society led by Hillary Clinton, Norman Lear, and Barbra Streisand. Then Buckley weighed in, writing in his syndicated column that Lind had done "everything to repudiate his own past except change his name." To date, Lind says, he has been called an aristocrat, a C.I.A. agent, a Zionist, and a Jew (he is a Methodist); it's all a little reminiscent of the battles between Trotskyites and Stalinists in the City College cafeteria fifty years ago.

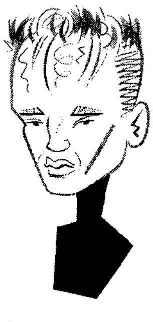
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

Considering all this, Lind doesn't seem like much of a bomb thrower. He is shortish and well fed, with clear blue eyes and the beginnings of jowls. At lunch recently, dressed in khakis and a blue denim shirt, he looked as if he would still be perfectly at home at, say, a Houston country club or a Newt Gingrich reading group. In Texas, where he grew up, he was a moderate, and when he came to Washington in the early nineteen-eighties (after stints at Yale and the University of Texas) he was inspired, he says, by the tolerant direction that the Republican Party seemed to be taking. But then came the return of supply-side economics and the rise of the Christian right, and Lind began to feel that the movement had no more room for him. "I thought that things would get better," he said, over eggs Benedict. "It was a delusion, in retrospect."

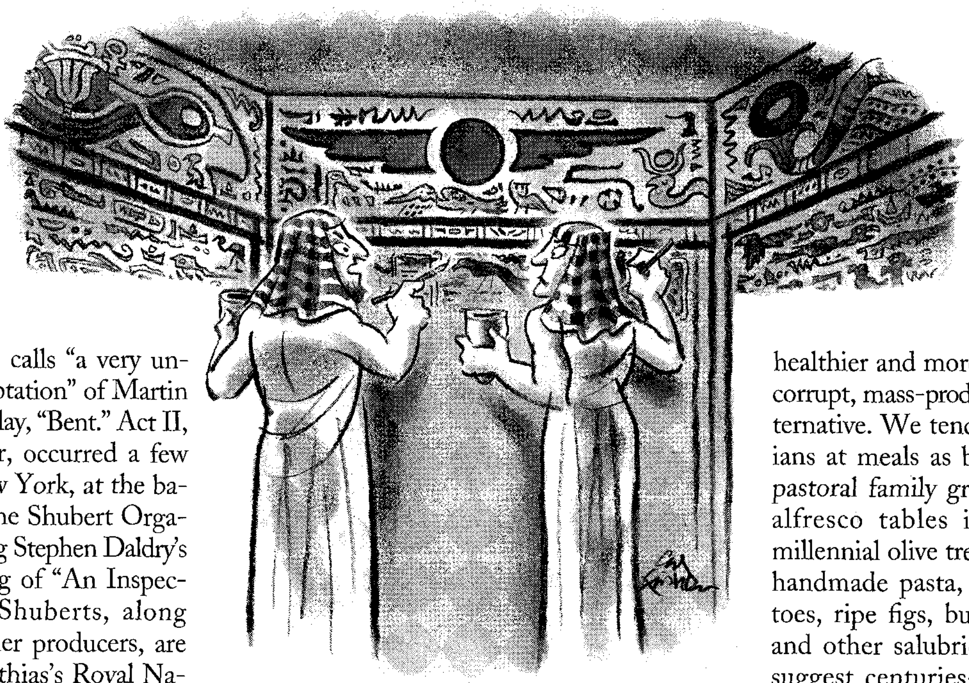
So here he is, the jilted believer, firing away at those who left him behind, and having quite a time. He is a bit vague about what his politics are now, clearly having too much fun explaining what they are not. He has an essay in the current issue of *Dissent*, in which he declares intellectual conservatism "dead" and says that Washington's network of right-wing think tanks and magazines has turned into a "patronage dump" for "a mudsill class of wealthy and dense Young Republicans." He has a book on American national identity coming out this summer from the Free Press, and is discussing proposals for a second book with various New York publishers. He has just written a novel, too, which he describes as a kind of Washington version of "Bonfire of the Vanities."

"My life was unbalanced toward the political over the last ten years," Lind said. He has become convinced that the conservative intellectual world is too narrow, too closely focussed on Washington. "It's all they do. Eat, drink, and sleep politics. They have no sense of humor, no irony or historical distance. The problem with the right is that it's filled with dweeby white guys," he concluded, with a little smile, as if to say that the problem with the right is that it is filled with the kind of person he used to be.

## BROADWAY'S LATEST BRITISH IMPORT



In many ways, the life of Seán Mathias is coming to resemble the plot of the Noël Coward play "Design for Living," which he recently staged in explicitly gay fashion at the Donmar Warehouse, in London, and which last week moved to the West End: each act occurs in a different cultural capital. Mathias's own Act I has found him



*"You'd better phrase that more politely. We no longer use the 🖕 word."*

based in London, where over the past twenty years he has worked as an actor, playwright, and director. Act III may find him in Los Angeles, for he is already developing his first feature—what he calls "a very unconventional adaptation" of Martin Sherman's 1979 play, "Bent." Act II, Scene 1, however, occurred a few weeks ago in New York, at the baronial offices of the Shubert Organization. Following Stephen Daldry's popular reworking of "An Inspector Calls," the Shuberts, along with assorted other producers, are transplanting Mathias's Royal National Theatre production of Jean Cocteau's 1938 succès de scandale, "Les Parents Terribles," to New York in April. But since they're orchestrating a Broadway event, not a snob hit, they have given the play an English title—"Indiscretions."

"I kept naïvely hoping that they would stick to the French title, as they did in London," says Mathias, a thirty-eight-year-old man of medium build, fair features, and a smooth, measured voice. " 'Indiscretions' is an understatement, and the play"—which concerns a bourgeois French family and contains hints of incest as well as a dizzying, boulevard-farce number of permutations on who wants whom—"is anything but an understatement." Mathias has faith in the Shuberts' marketing savvy, and expects that the New York cast—Kathleen Turner, Eileen Atkins, Roger Rees, and, from the London production, the young, innocently sensual Jude Law—will act as an antidote to the title's dry coyness. Yet he can't entirely conceal his disappointment. Several weeks after the conversation at the Shubert office, Mathias lamented good-naturedly, "What can I say? I'm the director, not the writer."

When Mathias *is* the writer, he does not shy away from the bold gesture. "Infidelities," one of six plays he has written since 1983, mingled sex-starved youths with a lower-middle-class couple, and when it opened Mathias was compared to Joe Orton. A new, semi-autobiographical drama, "Swansea Boys," will be produced in London in the spring of next year.

Mathias grew up in Wales, in a household that raged with high-pitched emotions, which led to his decision to leave home at seventeen for London and what would initially be a full-time career as an actor. While appearing in an Edinburgh fringe production, in 1978, he met the actor Sir Ian McKellen; they became lovers, and remained together for nine years. Alluding to post-breakup collaborations—which have included a West End "Bent," a small-scale "Uncle Vanya," and an upcoming production, at the National, of Sondheim's "A Little Night Music"—Mathias says, "It's great when you can survive one sort of relationship and transform it into something else. When one party is very visible, the other person can become submerged. I survived that to rise up on my own."

## FROM ITALY: GUILT, POLITICS, AND EROS IN A JAR

IT's time Americans took a good, hard look at Nutella. Not many of us are familiar with this singular Italian food product, which could be the means of liberating ourselves from an inferiority complex that has dogged us for at least the last twenty years—a complex based on the tormenting belief that all Italian food is healthier and more natural than the corrupt, mass-produced American alternative. We tend to envision Italians at meals as being gathered in pastoral family groups around vast alfresco tables in the shade of millennial olive trees, scarfing down handmade pasta, sun-dried tomatoes, ripe figs, buffalo mozzarella, and other salubrious dainties that suggest centuries-old peasant ties to the fecund Mediterranean soil. Instead, the average Italian is just as likely to be found indoors in front of a Berlusconi-televised tap-dancing girlie spectacular, devouring Nutella, one of the world's great junk foods and a substance just as fresh from the factory as a brand-new Fiat.

To take the crude step of defining Nutella—pronounced "noo-tella"—as a gooey hazelnut-and-chocolate spread that comes in a jar is a bit like describing the David of Michelangelo as a large carved piece of marble. Like any inspired creation, Nutella has an animating spirit that takes it beyond its physical components. Shamelessly sweet but not too sweet, more unctuous than peanut butter but with the same curiously sexy capacity for gluing the jaws together, and intensely chocolate-flavored but with a peculiar pillowy mildness that appeals to regressive urges, it is made to be spread on bread but more often ends up being eaten in hasty spoonfuls straight from the jar. It costs little, and tastes better than most of the decadent desserts that posh restaurants baptize with names like Quadruple Chocolate Ganache in a Coulis of Fresh Madagascar Cacao Bean Purée. Though Nutella is marketed as a snack for children, everyone knows that it's packed with more sugar and fat per ounce than Oprah Winfrey on an ice-cream binge. It's naughty and it's addictive, as its popularity inside and outside Italy attests. Millions of jars of Nutella are sold in Europe, Japan, and parts of South America every year; it has become chic in Paris sidewalk cafés and is even rumored to have been glimpsed in Kenya.

To Italians, Nutella has become a cult. Developed after the Second World War as an industrial version of a traditional homemade chocolate-hazelnut delicacy called *gianduja*, the spread appealed to the hunger for cheap sweets in the lean postwar years, when bread and chocolate was a treat that children dreamed of. The increasing national love for Nutella kept pace with Italy's four-decade journey from poverty to world industrial power. Everybody under fifty seems to have childhood Nutella memories of blissful after-school snacks, of midnight raids on the kitchen nooks where Mamma hid the jar. Everybody's ex-spouse seems to have become Nutella-dependent during the low point of the marriage. Recently, innumerable famous personages, among them the singer Gianni Morandi, have publicly confessed their addiction. In 1993, a journalist in *La Stampa* wrote of Nutella, "A devouring passion. Uncontrollable. It has struck heads of state, bewitched artists, seduced poets. The love for Nutella is inexplicable, it just is. . . . More than a food, it is a category of the spirit, a state of superior perception." When, in the same year, a young satirist published a comic pamphlet eulogizing Nutella in Spanish, English, French, and Latin (excerpt: "*Nutella omnia divisa est in partes tres*"), the work sold a hundred and fifty thousand copies in three months.

Like any squashy chocolate food with infantile associations, Nutella is obliquely linked not only to guilt but to Eros. The erotic factor came fully out of the closet this past Christmas, when the New Open Gate, the most fashionable club in Rome, put on an Il Primo Nutella Party, featuring hundreds of jars and an eight-metre baguette slathered with the stuff. In the course of what was described as an extraordinarily successful evening, guests spread it on their partners and licked it off.

The Nutella party was sponsored by a local branch of Forza Italia, the political organization of then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Only a few days later, Berlusconi resigned. Coincidence? Pundits will no doubt argue for years over the extent of the occult role of a chocolate spread in the tempestuous fortunes of fin-de-siècle Italian governments, but one thing is certain: ever in tune with the Italian soul, Nutella in the nineties has become publicly associated with the newly powerful right-wing establishment. In an article discussing the political implications of the Nutella party—entitled "WHAT COLOR IS NUTELLA?"—the weekly news magazine *Panorama* quoted Teodoro Buontempo, a notorious hard-liner of the ultraconservative National Alliance: "Nutella is definitely right wing. With its solidity, it gives an idea of well-being; yet it is also fluid, it strikes the imagination."

However, in the same article a centrist-minded spokesman for Forza Italia declared soothingly that in mixing images of traditional family values with the low-priced mass consumption valued by the left, Nutella represents a future ideologically united Italy—presumably an Italy in which the lion lies down with the lamb and everyone licks his neighbor.

What should the United States' position on Nutella be? The first appropriate response for sensible Americans is a sigh of relief and an abandonment of all those complexes we have about the Mediterranean diet. The second should be to demand from our leaders immediate mass Nutella importation and distribution. Some jars have been sighted in supermarkets across the country, but not nearly enough for these unsettled times. There is no reason that New World citizens should not look to the Old World for solutions. After all, it was a proto-Italian commentator who came up with one of the earliest and best suggestions for keeping a nation happy. Instead of bread and circuses, we can easily make do with bread and chocolate.

## SEEN AROUND TOWN

Intellectuals used to write with zeal: the manifesto, the declaration, the list of demands were all accepted forms of discourse. But today, it seems, polemic has been consigned to talk radio. Now a small Chicago-based magazine called *The Baffler* has set out to revive the written diatribe. In strident, revolution-is-nigh tones, it rails against the media's obsession with each hip new trend—what it calls the Next Big Thing.

The other day, members of *The Baffler's* young staff came to New York and threw a party at the Knitting Factory, in Tribeca. About three hundred people showed up, mostly striving writers and publishing types. Dress was exceedingly casual. *The Baffler's* editors handed out copies of their latest issue—only slightly larger than *TV Guide* but with the weight of a hand grenade—and occasionally interrupted the cocktail-hour small talk to speak to a radio crew from WFMU, which was doing a live feed from the party. Thomas Frank, *The Baffler's* twenty-nine-year-old editor-in-chief, went up to the bar and ordered half a dozen pints of beer. These were passed through the crowd like buckets down a fire brigade until they reached a postage-stamp-size table in back where a handful of editors and writers were sitting and discussing, among other things, "the pusillanimity of the professional middle class," MTV, and the idea that "if you look at the business world now, the carnivalesque is totally in the ascendant." Almost inevitably, conversation turned to the Gap—the target of early *Baffler* rants—and to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* that cited a "Gap-lash" among today's youth. "The Gap has lost nearly thirty per cent of its cool credibility. And it's thanks to us, too," Frank boasted, prompting a round of high fives and a raising of glasses.

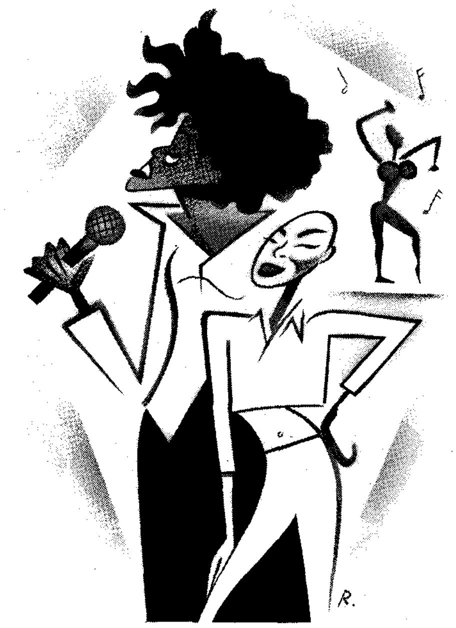
•

Bang the drum *really* slowly. Recently seen among the attractions listed on one of the marquees of the United Artists Criterion Center, a movie theatre at Broadway and Forty-fourth Street: "DUM BAND DUMBER."

## PHILIP FONER'S FOND FAREWELL

AMONG those who braved the cold on a recent Sunday to gather at a union hall on West Forty-third Street, you could feel a certain festive atmosphere of the gang's all here. And for the most part it was, minus one: the labor historian Philip S. Foner, who died in December, at age eighty-three. The aging Red-diaper babies and other admirers who gathered for a memorial service heard the Foner legend again: how he was born to Russian immigrants and grew up in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn; how he was taken to hear Eugene Debs speak when he was six years old; how he and his twin brother, Jack, had weirdly parallel academic careers, making Phi Beta Kappa together at City College, getting Ph.D.s at Columbia, and teaching jobs in the City College History Department; how he lost his job when he was blacklisted in 1941 and didn't get another academic appointment until 1967; how he went on to write and edit more than a hundred books and articles, on everyone from Thomas Paine to Mark Twain to Paul Robeson; how he pioneered what today is called the New History—research on blacks, women, and workers.

At the memorial service, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger described Foner's "great brilliance and extraordinary devotion to civil and human rights and social and equal justice," and Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee read from his work on Frederick Douglass and "thanked God" for his enormous contributions to black scholarship (even if the left-wing audience was "too leftist to thank God"). The "C" word was never invoked, but its legacy enveloped the room. The scene looked like callbacks for "Reds." The New Left seemed to be in a post-Mario slump, and welcomed the chance to reminisce; the Old Left were glad to see one another alive. To close the ceremony, Foner's daughter Laura led the gathering in a chorus of "Solidarity Forever." Then everyone was forced back out into the bitter winds, with only memories of May Days to keep them warm.



## "IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING A BLACK WOMAN IN THE NINETIES"

AT Juicy, the new club open every other Sunday at the Buddha Bar, on Varick Street, thirty-year-old Lysa Cooper is the resident "diva." At Juicy, which has a pool room, a bar, a dance floor with Chinese lanterns floating above it, and a raised area on which female dancers strip, Lysa Cooper is the self-described "ring leader." Dressed in a black T-shirt with the word "Whore" studded on the front, bronze leather pants with complicated lacing in back, and platform boots, she looks like the attitude Tina Turner tried to project in "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome": menacing but adorable. Cooper has approached life with a variety of attitudes, in a variety of professional and private roles: as a fashion stylist, a d.j., an actress, a singer, a "best friend" (to the late artist Keith Haring, among others), and as the cynosure of any gathering. In her current incarnation as inventor, promoter, den mother, and m.c. at Juicy, Cooper talks shit. "Some of you have been flirting with my lover," she says over the mike, coolly observing the evening's proceedings from the small dance floor. "But I'll get over it. Because I *know* it's juicy. And it's 1995."

Cooper started Juicy with her roommate, Belinda Becker, an actress who is also Juicy's resident d.j. They used to go to strip clubs a lot, and while they admired the dancers, they were not admiring of the management. "Most of the guys who run those clubs rip the girls off," Cooper says. "They fine them if they're late or miss a day's work. And the girls can be replaced without notice. And they have to share their tips with the guys who are running things." Cooper wanted to provide the dancers with an alternative. "At Juicy, they perform two sets and keep their tips from the audience," she says. "If they don't get tipped, I give them a share of the gross, and they get to work for another woman. God damn it."

COOPER uses "God damn it" as a kind of religious exhortation, especially when she's on the mike, describing the effect that dancers with names like Black Moon, Miss Poison Domination, Brandy, Viva Knieval, and Lady Luscious are having on *her*. She says, in a measured voice, "*Wooo* shit. It's all about being a black woman in the nineties. It's all about women once again blowing my mind at Juicy. [Pause]. God damn it." Or: "God damn it [pause, slow intake of breath], the d.j. is trying to work me again. Work me, d.j., work me. [Deep threatening pause.] And it better be juicy."

Cooper's sidekicks include Serge Becker, the co-founder of Bowery Bar, and the performance artist Paul Alexander, who backs Cooper up on the mike. The audience they play to is mostly women, including the downtown unisex haberdasher Patricia Field, the photographer Ellen von Unwerth, and the gallery owner Andrea Rosen. Cooper encourages a mix of downtown and the outer boroughs. She encourages young gay black women from Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island to think of themselves as "my target audience. Those girls don't have a bar of their own like we do in Manhattan," she says. Sometimes, when women Cooper thinks of as her target audience enter Juicy, a look of defensiveness will cross their faces. Upon recognizing their panic and assumed outsiderness, Cooper will embrace them with her warm look, born of a life unmindful of conventional categories, acknowledging difference. ♦

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*This week's contributors: Malcolm Gladwell, Brendan Lemon, Andrea Lee, Warren St. John, Anthony Haden-Guest, Catherine Clinton, Hilton Als.*

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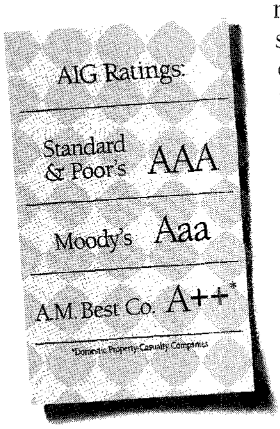

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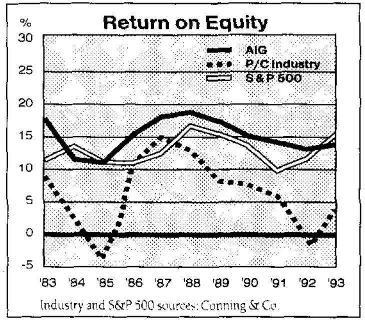

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

# A SENSE OF WHERE HE'S GOING

*There is a gap between the foundering Democrats and the unabashedly warlike Republicans, and Bill Bradley is positioning himself as an alternative to both.*

BY MICHAEL KELLY

ONE afternoon a couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of witnessing, in the office of Bill Bradley, the only subversive act I have ever seen performed by a United States senator. I had come to Bradley's office, a bland box on the seventh floor of the bland box that is the newest of the three Senate office buildings, to ask the Senator about several public remarks in which he seemed to both suggest and reject himself as a possible savior for a Democratic Party in crisis. In the most aggressive of those remarks, Bradley had told the New York radio personality Don Imus that "anybody could step up to the plate if the circumstances are right" to challenge President Clinton from within his party in 1996. In the most demurring, he had told the National Press Club that Americans were foolish to hope that a "knight in shining armor" would save them, and that the solution to the country's woes "will not occur because of the arrival of a hero." In the most coy, he had declared himself to be "ambiguously definitive, or is it definitively ambiguous," about his plans in 1996.

I was standing by his desk, a great cluttered slab of blond wood, when Bradley entered. As he approached, I stuck out my right hand. He grasped it routinely, but then, instead of shaking it, he lowered himself with a sudden fluid grace, folding like a jackknife to rest on his right knee. With my hand still in his, he bent his head in a brief, mock-solemn bow and swept his long left arm in an exaggerated gesture of obeisance—a kind of cartoon courtier's genuflection. Bradley is six feet five and I am five feet six, so the joke would have worked simply on the level of physical humor, but I think he meant a good deal more by it than that. He meant to mock, in a gentle way, everything about the transaction that was going on between the two of us: the mutually beneficial arrangements that obtain between political figures like him and reporters like me; the fact of his vulnerability to the prejudices and presumptions of the press; the whole idea of the culture of celebrity, the fiction that the public man is the grand figure his publicity says he is. Above all, he meant to mock himself.

It is difficult to imagine another politician of similar stature—Bob Dole, say, or Sam Nunn—doing something so purposely deflationary, but the moment was profoundly in character for William Warren Bradley. When Bradley was twenty-one years old, and was a basketball phenomenon at Princeton University, John McPhee wrote an elegant and admiring Profile about him for this magazine. McPhee entitled his article "A Sense of Where You Are," a phrase he borrowed from Bradley's explanation of how, without looking, he could throw the ball over his shoulder and into the basket. "When you have played basketball for a while, you don't need to look at the basket when you are in close like this," Bradley told McPhee. "You develop a sense of where you are."

McPhee's choice of title was knowing. Bradley's search for a sense of where he is was then and is still about more than where the hole is that the ball goes into. The central fact about Bradley is that for most of his life he has been the object of great expectations. He has been a celebrated and adulated figure since he was seventeen, and he was being suggested as Presidential material by the time he was twenty. Yet he has always seemed to regard this attention with an ambivalence so deep as to border on perversity. Bradley's ambivalence—his definitive ambiguity, his search for where he is—is a subject he has been thinking about for as long as he has been thinking seriously, which is ever since people began staring at him on the street. "I learned about this from

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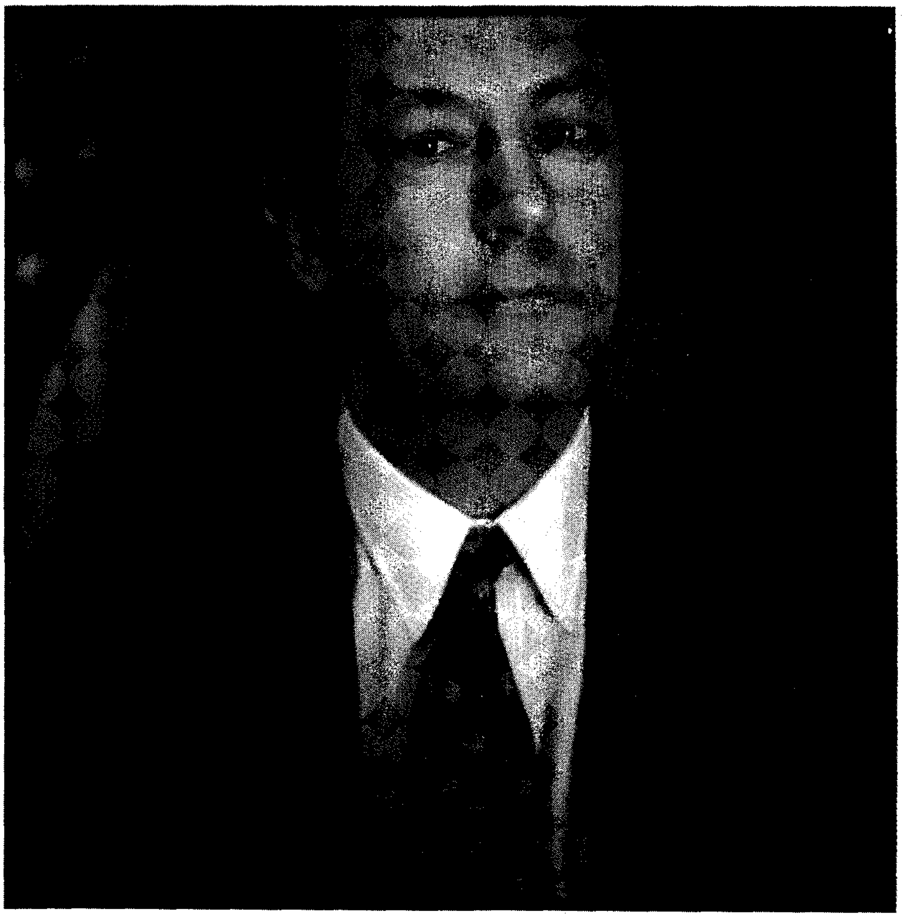
being in the public eye since I was about seventeen or eighteen," he says. "Keep in mind, the public eye in Crystal City, Missouri, saw a little less than the public eye in New York, but it had the same effect on me: Somebody is watching. They're interested in what you do. So you quickly begin to distinguish among people's interests in you. You learn to think about what is the nature of that interest, and how does it affect you, and how do you feel about it. You learn to think about where you locate yourself in all of this swirling around you."

What is most interesting about this—and what is important to the larger questions of 1996, the future of the Democratic Party, and the national debate that is now under way about the role of government in American life—is the *reason* for Bradley's ambivalence. It is not that he is afraid that the job of national leadership is unworthy of him but that he is unworthy of the job. He seems to worry not about being a hero (to use a word that crops up surprisingly often in his writings and conversation) but about not being one; he worries about being a mere celebrity. Bradley hates that word. "I don't use the word 'celebrity,' " he says. "If you notice in my book"—he is referring to his well-written, faintly bitter 1976 basketball memoir, "Life on the Run"—"I used the phrase 'well-knownness,' not 'celebrity.' " Actually, in "Life on the Run" Bradley does use the word "celebrity," and he uses it about himself, in a passage worth quoting at length, because it so precisely describes his enduring fear:

> The other Knicks and I got to our present positions of celebrity through similar routes. There are many encouragements for a boy to be an athlete while in high school. The good athlete is popular among his classmates, but the star athlete develops a reputation outside high school. Townspeople, adults, single him out for attention and interest. Teachers might favor him, even if unconsciously. Growing up, when most young people struggle to define their tastes and develop their own sense of right and wrong, the star athlete lies protected in his momentary nest of fame. The community tells him that he is a basketball star. For the townspeople, his future is as clearly outlined as his record-book past. They expect him to become an even greater athlete and to do those things which will bring about the fulfillment of what is wholly their fantasy. The adolescent who receives such attention rarely develops personal doubts. There is a smug cockiness about achievements, or a sincere determination to continue along a course that has brought success and praise. The athlete continues to devote his energies to sport. Compared with the natural fears and insecurities of his classmates, he has it easy. His self-assurance is constantly reinforced by public approval. . . . Only toward the end of their careers do the stars realize that their sense of identity is insufficient.



*Bradley seems to worry not about being a hero but about not being one; he worries about being a mere celebrity.*

DAVID BARRY

Bradley's concern about celebrityhood is a practical, and very personal, matter. While the hero's accomplishments may make him an enduring figure, the celebrity's ephemeral popularity dooms him to inconsequence. Bradley still cites as a primary influence during what he calls "a very formative period in my so-called well-knownness" Daniel Boorstin's nineteen-seventies polemic on modern popular culture, "The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America." As quoted by Bradley:

> The very agency which first makes the celebrity in the long run inevitably destroys him. . . . The newspapers make him and they unmake him—not by murder but by suffocation or starvation. . . . There is not even any tragedy in the celebrity's fall, for he is a man returned to his proper anonymous station. The tragic hero, in Aristotle's familiar definition, was man fallen from great estate, a great man with a tragic flaw. He had somehow become the victim of his own greatness. Yesterday's celebrity, however, is a commonplace man who has been fitted back into his proper commonplaceness not by any fault of his own, but by time itself. . . . One is made, the other unmade, by repetition. The celebrity is born in the daily papers, and never loses the mark of his fleeting origin.

When I asked Bradley if he still believed that the public systematically destroys those whom it lifts to celebrity, he replied, "Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, you know, it is inevitable." His worry is grounded in the lessons of his life. Twice, Bradley has suffered the trauma Boorstin describes as the public's rejection of the celebrated figure. The first time was in 1967, when he failed to live up to the basketball world's expectations of him as a rookie New York Knick. The second was in 1990, when New Jersey voters came unexpectedly close to spurning their senior senator in favor of the then relatively unknown Christine Todd Whitman. Bradley's reaction to both events was fundamentally the

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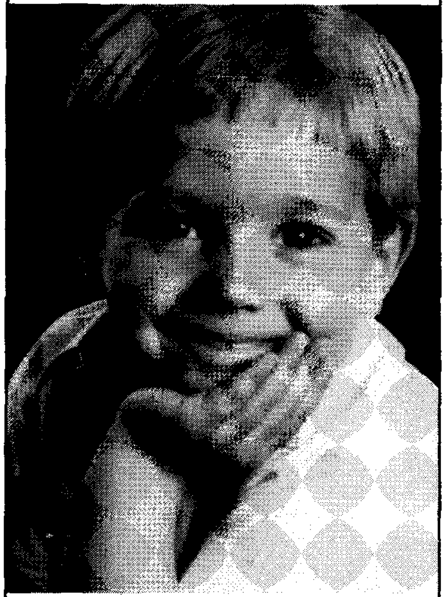

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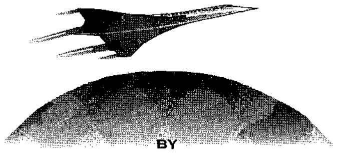

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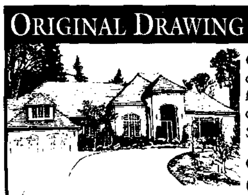

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same: he decided that the public's rejection of him liberated him to reject, in essence, the demands of the public, to focus more closely on his own sense of who he was.

"It's about living life more, and seeing more levels, and the way things open up at the same time that they close," Bradley told me. "After that first year with the Knicks, with the way the public, the audience, treated me, I always had a great deal of ambivalence, and therefore I never gave myself to the public. And as a result, you know, I came to feel that it was my performance on the court and the integrity of what we were doing there in and of itself that mattered, and that the millions watching were incidental to what the craft was—and that realization was a liberation. And later, when I was in politics, I began to think there was this kind of special relationship between me and the people. I was getting a lot of positive feedback, because I was, in part, saying different things to different people—not entirely different things but what's viewed as the political craft, which is going in, sensing what the group is interested in, and telling them your views in a way that is not offensive to them. You don't change your positions, but, you know, you emphasize different things.

"And what happened in 1990 was a reminder: No, no, the public is very much like it was when you were a player. That doesn't mean the public is any less important or wonderful or essential to what you do, but there's less dependence when you control what you say and you say what you really feel. That's the closest you can get to the kind of performance on the court that has internal consistency. Your internal consistency is what you write and say, what you stand on. That becomes like the game, as I think about it.

"This is a new thing. I don't want you to lose this comparison, because there is a real similarity here and I am just formulating it. The similarity is between playing the game so you concentrate on the integrity and the completeness of the game in itself and writing and saying what you really want to say in a particular speech without worrying about how it will be received. When you make the move on the court, you don't make it for the fan, and when you make the speech you don't make it for any particular group. You just make it, and people have to react as they see fit."

BILL BRADLEY grew up in the Mississippi River town of Crystal City, thirty miles south of St. Louis, and the expectations started early. "I was an only child born to an energetic mother who spent a lot of time at church, and a banker father who suffered from severe arthritis," Bradley recalled in his memoir. "We lived in comfortable circumstances. As early as I can remember, I was programmed to become a successful gentleman. My father insisted on manners and my mother on success. I took lessons in practically everything: dancing, trumpet, French horn, piano, boxing, tennis, golf, swimming, canoeing, typing, French, and horseback riding."

Bradley began playing basketball at the age of nine, and by fourteen he had taken up the game in great earnest. McPhee, in his 1965 Profile, described Bradley's high-school basketball regimen: He "set a schedule for himself that he adhered to for four full years—in the school year, three and a half hours every day after school, nine to five on Saturday, one-thirty to five on Sunday, and, in the summer, about three hours a day. He put ten pounds of lead slivers in his sneakers, set up chairs as opponents and dribbled in slalom fashion around them, and wore eyeglass frames that had a piece of cardboard taped to them so that he could not see the floor, for a good dribbler never looks at the ball."

By the age of seventeen, Bradley had settled into his adult height and had become recognized as one of the best high-school players in the country. He was recruited by more than seventy colleges, most of which offered scholarships. He chose Princeton, which offered no money at all. His performance there would make him nationally famous.

By the mid-nineteen-sixties, college ball had progressed most of the way toward becoming the big and casually crooked business that it is today, and a school like Princeton was not seriously expected to compete with basketball factories like U.C.L.A. and the University of Michigan. The most that even the best Ivy League teams could hope for was an honorable loss in the Eastern

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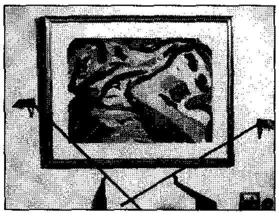

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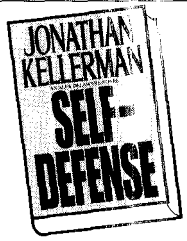

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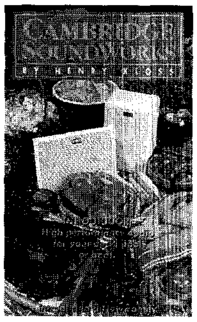

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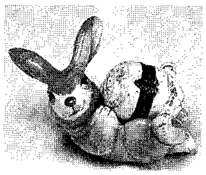

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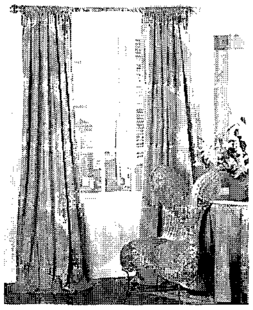

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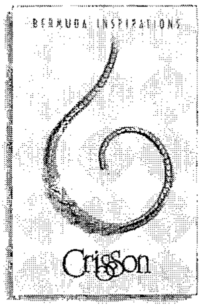

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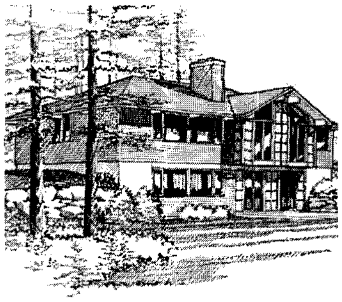

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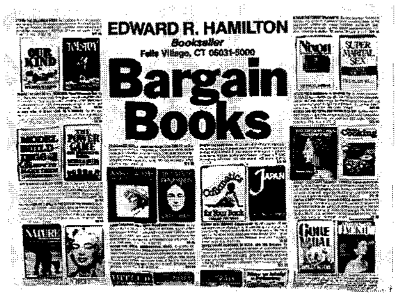

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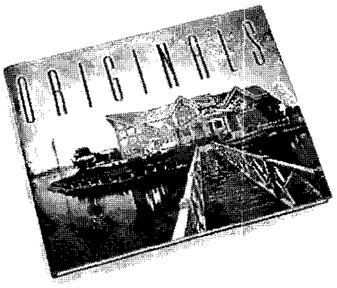

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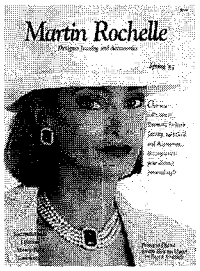

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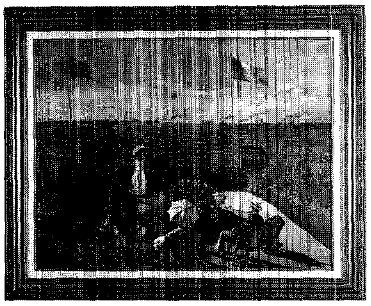

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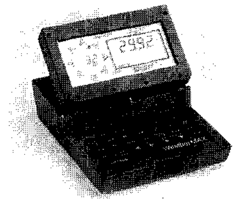

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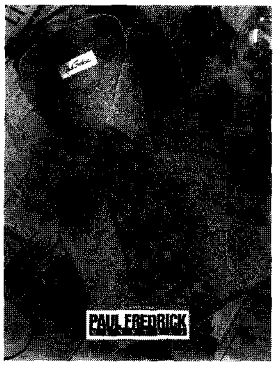

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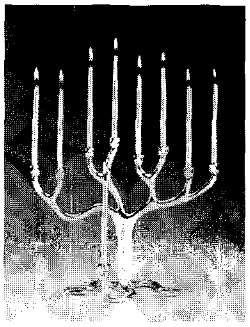

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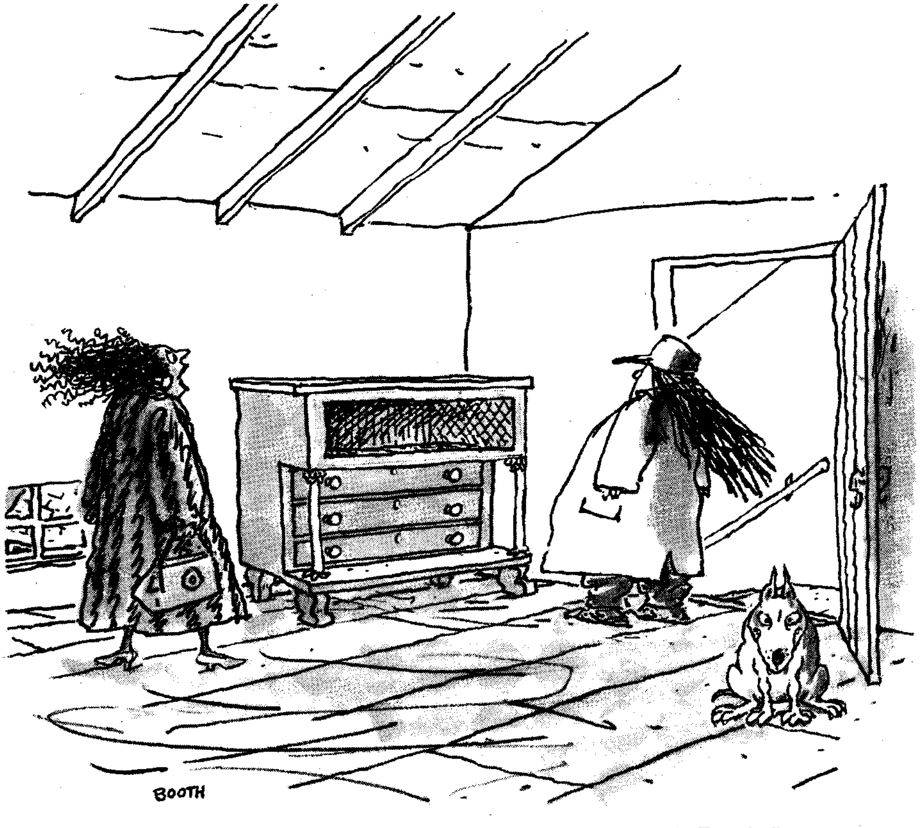
Regional Championships of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In 1965, his senior year, Bradley led the Princeton team not only to qualify for the Eastern Regionals but actually to win the event, something that no Ivy League team had ever done in the era of modern basketball, and that only one—the University of Pennsylvania in 1979—has done since. Princeton's victory was overwhelmingly due to Bradley, the star of an otherwise modestly endowed team. In his transcendent season, Bradley, triumphing by the rigor of his game over his own physical limitations (he was not all that tall, he was not particularly strong, he could not jump very high, and he was relatively slow), averaged over thirty points per game and led his team in the breaking of more than a half-dozen tournament records.

Bradley had by now become a mythic figure. McPhee noticed a curious thing: "I have asked all sorts of people who know Bradley, or know about him, what they think he will be doing when he is forty. A really startling number of them, including teachers, coaches, college boys, and even journalists, give the same answer: 'He will be the governor of Missouri.' The chief dissent comes from people who look beyond the stepping stone of the Missouri State House and calmly tell you that Bradley is going to be President." But the signs that Bradley was less than comfortable with his identity as a star were already there. Bradley's dislike of attention reached the point of notability when he returned from the N.C.A.A. championships to a deliriously excited Princeton campus. "Conquerors of this sort usually follow up their homecomings with a lingering parade through the streets of Rome, but Bradley disappeared less than twenty-four hours after his return, having arranged to live alone in a house whose owners were away," McPhee wrote. "Far enough from the campus to be cut off from it almost completely, he stayed there for a month—while a couple of hundred reporters, photographers, ministers, missionaries, Elks, Lions, Rotarians, TV producers, mayors, ad men, and fashion editors tried unsuccessfully to find him."

Although the New York Knickerbockers had picked him as their first choice in the annual player draft, Bradley decided, in the spring of 1965, to quit basketball. After writing a thirty-three-thousand-word senior thesis (on Harry Truman's 1940 senatorial campaign) and making a swan-song appearance at the World University Games in Budapest, Bradley went to England, to spend two years at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.



*"The top drawer was used to bury your Uncle Bertie."*

"I was determined when I left the United States in 1965 that I was finished with basketball, or more appropriately I was finished with the public acclaim that surrounded the game," Bradley wrote. "My last year in college, I had received fifty letters a day and had become something of a symbol as the Christian scholar-athlete. Although it was true that I studied, practiced and went to church, the media exaggerated each facet of my life until expectations were generated in the public that I could never fulfill. . . . The greater the acclaim became, the more certain it was that the public appetite could never be satisfied. The only way out, I thought, was to reject basketball and become a lawyer or a businessman."

After two years of Oxford, Bradley changed his mind. He returned to the United States, and to basketball. But his experience in his first year as a Knick brutally confirmed his fears about living in the culture of celebrity. Bradley came to the Knicks with a reputation that was, as he says now, seriously inflated. He was Dollar Bill, one of the highest-paid rookies of the year, and a player whose game had been described (not just by McPhee but by many sportswriters) as something that approached the condition of pure grace. It was perhaps impossible for Bradley to live up to the expectations that awaited his N.B.A. début, and he did not. In the 1967-68 season, Bradley, apparently overwhelmed by a level of play that was more physical than he had been used to, averaged only eight points per game, for a humble season total of three hundred and sixty points. He made only forty-two per cent of his field goals and was credited with only a hundred and thirteen rebounds for the whole season, averaging only two and a half rebounds per game. The fans reacted accordingly.

LATE in the afternoon, Bradley was hunched slightly forward in his chair, talking intently, and with the small hesitations and half stops of a man working his way through difficult terrain, about what happened to him during what he called—twice—"the

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searing emotional experience" of 1967.

"When I was a rookie in the N.B.A., basically I failed. I was too slow to play guard and people literally— I'd walk out through the opening in the old Garden, under the stands, and people would be spitting on me and throwing coins at me. And I'd get in cabs in New York, and I would be absolutely attacked by the cabdrivers—you know, 'You no-good, worthless bum, maybe next year you'll be better, but now you're nothing.' " He laughed, and shook his head slightly. "And people would walk up to me on the streets and curse me. That was an experience like I had never had."

When I asked Bradley what he had learned from it, he reeled off a mantra of commands to himself: "Persevere, just keep moving ahead, go to work every day, don't pay attention to everyone around you, just keep moving right ahead, devise your plan and execute it and you're gonna get better." He learned, in other words, what he already instinctively knew: to focus not on the celebrity's hunger for immediate public approval but on the integrity of the game—to play to the audience of himself rather than to the fickle, cruel crowd.

Adopting a style that emphasized his superb skills as a playmaker rather than as a scorer, Bradley developed into a solid if unspectacular member of a team that won two N.B.A. championships over the course of ten years. In 1977, he retired from the Knicks and immediately entered politics. In 1978, capitalizing on his well-knownness, Bradley won a United States Senate seat from New Jersey. Over the course of the next twelve years, the solid if unspectacular Knickerbocker acquired a reputation as a solid if unspectacular senator; his leadership in passing the Tax Reform Act of 1986 was often cited as his greatest accomplishment. In his public utterances, Bradley followed the somewhat unusual policy of speaking only on issues about which he was actually knowledgeable, and when he spoke he did so with a bland sobriety that rarely offended—or excited. He was popular. It is perhaps true that his greatest popularity was with national political writers, who never ceased to regard him as Presidential material, despite his undeniable dullness. But it was generally accepted that almost everybody liked Bill Bradley to one degree or another.

It was therefore a shock to many, most particularly to Bradley himself, when, in the last election, New Jersey's voters returned Bradley to office by only a two-point margin over the challenger Whitman. The voters' disenchantment in 1990, Bradley says again, was a "comparable encounter" to the fans' disenchantment in 1967. And, he says, it was entirely his fault. He had forgotten in politics what he had learned in basketball. "Prior to 1990, I would think through everything—what's the impact on this group, that group, oh, I gotta change this word, that word—the end result of which is that you are not communicating, because you don't have any sort of coherence, you have a sort of broadly acceptable pabulum," Bradley told me. "For much of those twelve years—probably for eight or nine of them—I knew what it was to appeal to all people by never seeming too threatening to any and also never too clearly defined, so that when I was with one group, although I would maintain my integrity, I would shade my opinion. I thought that was the craft of the politician, that the politician had an idea of where he was going and in order to get the greater number of people to go along with him he or she had to kind of never be too sharp-edged, and meanwhile you amass accomplishments. All that came on the rocks in 1990.

"That had the effect of reminding me that, you know, this could all end tomorrow. I asked myself what would I wish I had said if it did end tomorrow, and I decided that when the impulses struck I was going to let them flow. I guess the shorthand way of saying this is that for twelve years I spoke primarily from my mind, and after '90 I decided to also speak from my heart. Not to lie awake at night thinking about it. Just to do it. Just to do whatever there is to be done. To say what you feel. And they say if you don't make all these calculations you're a bad politician. Well, it seems to me that maybe you *are* a bad politician, but maybe in that case what you want to be is a leader."

Beyond what he had learned about his own failures, Bradley says that 1990 also taught him about the failures of the political system in general. "I realized that there are a lot of things that are not said that are central to people's lives, and politics glosses along on the surface more and more, and people are becoming detached and disconnected from the democratic process. Whether the issue is race or economic change or violence or the breakdown in our civil society, these are things that have to be talked about in a language that allows a dialogue, not in a language that forecloses discussion. And so often in politics, you know, there's no real discussion. You go into a political campaign and what do you do? You decide, Well, what two messages do I want to get across? And then you just repeat, repeat, repeat. And we have got to a point with electoral politics where it has become more and more peripheral.

"And I figured out that the only way we will ever get to a point where politics is more relevant to people's lives is to risk telling the truth, as you see it, to whomever," Bradley said. "I mean, there is always a certain frailty to things, a certain human limitation to things. So when I say I tell the truth I don't want to sound too— Well, how should I say this? I would like it to be more of a—not a flute, necessarily, but maybe a trumpet as opposed to a tuba, or maybe a string quartet as opposed to an orchestra. You know, keeping in mind one's own frailty."

THE Senator's rebirth is real enough, and rooted very much in his newly reëmbraced distinction between celebrityhood and heroism, between playing to the crowd and playing to his own sense of things. But it is also less quixotic than is suggested by Bradley's image of himself as the lonely trumpeter of truth, and much less altruistic. A senior Democratic Party strategist close to Bill Clinton has this to say of Bradley, who is becoming an increasingly disliked figure at the White House: "I don't say he's insincere when he says he was liberated by his close race in 1990. But I would say also the following: This is a very careful guy. This is not a guy who does things without thinking about them. He doesn't do things in an unconscious fashion. Anyone who has read McPhee knows that he is a very meticulous player, who rehearses things, and thinks about what he is doing, and practices. He may very well feel free now to speak his mind, but you can be sure he has thought about what is on his mind very carefully. He is trying to stake out a posture here."

And an interesing posture it is. Since 1990, Bradley has done a good deal of speaking out about what he believes is a crisis in politics. America is suffering, he says, from the failings of both parties to intelligently address the great issues. This is not a disinterested position. Bradley has concluded that there is a gap between the floundering and flaccid Democratic Party led by Bill Clinton and the unabashedly warlike Republican Party led by Newt Gingrich, a gap that may allow for the passage of a political figure who has positioned himself as an alternative to both—namely, himself.

Bradley hits three subjects, all of which are central to the ongoing national debate and to the anxieties of many voters in both parties: race relations, crime (and the related decay of civic society), and the economic transformation of America. He discusses these large subjects not in the hedging terms of a cautious senator but much in the manner of a Presidential hopeful, criticizing both the Republicans and his fellow-Democrats freely, and putting forth the sort of panoramic proposals that are usually associated with national campaigns. And there is something else about Bradley's oratory that calls to mind Presidential campaigning: on examination, much of what the Senator calls truthtelling turns out to be—while obviously true—also obviously designed for political gain, for bipartisan, crossover appeal.

A speech before the Center for National Policy in October of 1993 is a good example. In it Bradley told nightmare stories of four American workers who had lost or were fearful of losing their jobs. "These composite portraits of Louise Pearl, George Fatemi, and the Joneses are not unusual," he said. "There are millions of Americans who find economic security an unattainable dream. It is as if Americans are adrift on a gigantic river of economic transformation that carries away everything that resists the swirling currents of its mighty flow." In answer, Bradley proposed an "economic-security platform" consisting of three traditionally liberal planks: guaranteed basic health coverage, guaranteed government-financed worker retraining and education, and guaranteed "pension security." But he also repeatedly struck conservative notes of government restraint and opposition to entitlements.

And while Bradley predictably criticized the Reagan and Bush Administrations for permitting a huge expansion of the national debt, he also extended the blame to the current Democratic President, asserting that "as 1993 began, the debt over the next five years was expected to go from $4 trillion to $5.4 trillion, and even after the 1993 Clinton budget, it will go to $4.9 trillion."

On the related issues of race, crime, and civic decay—which Bradley clearly understands to be the next great battleground of American politics—the Senator's political posture is even more interesting. On the one hand, Bradley positions himself as a racial healer of a traditionally liberal sort, appealing to those who fear that increasing attacks on affirmative action and welfare will lead to race war. As a former professional basketball player, Bradley is one of those rare Americans who have lived in a truly integrated world. So it carries resonance when he asks "When was the last time you talked about race with someone of a different race?" and replies "If the answer is never, you're part of the problem."

But Bradley also talks about race, crime, and society in stark language rarely heard from Democrats; in fact, if a prominent Republican said the things Bradley has been saying lately, he would be labelled a racist. "Today, many whites, responding to a more violent reality, heightened by sensational news stories, see young black men travelling in groups, cruising the city, looking for trouble, and they are frightened," he observed in a 1992 speech. "Many white Americans, whether fairly or unfairly, seem to be saying of some young black males, 'You litter the street and deface the subway, and no one, black or white, says stop. You cut school, threaten a teacher, "dis" a social worker, and no one, white or black, says stop. You snatch a purse, you crash a concert, break a telephone box, and no one, white or black, says stop. You rob a store, rape a jogger, shoot a tourist, and when they catch you, if they catch you, you cry racism. And nobody, white or black, says stop.' "

In a speech last winter in which

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he denounced the racist remarks that Khalid Abdul Muhammad, the former Nation of Islam spokesman, made at Kean College, in New Jersey, Bradley said this: "Minister Farrakhan once in the nineteen-eighties addressed eighteen thousand cheering supporters in Madison Square Garden. He filled his remarks with crude attacks on white America. Two hours after the end of the program, a friend of mine who worked at the Garden told me that six of the minister's bodyguards beat senseless two white stagehands who were taking down the speaking platform. The stagehands' offense: they were white and in the wrong place at the wrong time. When one sees six young black men walking down the street at night, all those memories come rushing back."

If there was any possibility that his listeners might miss how sharply Bradley was trying to distinguish himself from those who spout the traditional liberal pieties about race, the Senator took care of that with a barb at the tail end of his speech: "Since Mr. Muhammad's remarks at Kean College, there have been many responses. The Governor said, 'Go see "Schindler's List,"' and promised an undisclosed number of town meetings on hate. The U.S. Senate passed a resolution of condemnation. The President was virtually silent. All of those reactions are either incomplete or insufficient."

In my two conversations with Bradley for this article, he was careful not to attack Bill Clinton directly, but didn't mind discussing the President as an example of false heroism, what Bradley derides as the political process's perpetual hunger for a prepackaged savior. "In politics, that's what they're always looking for," he said. "I mean, wasn't that what the J.F.K.-handshake business was all about? This idea that the torch was being passed, that if you vote for this guy you will find the successor."

The Senator was perfectly comfortable, too, talking about Clinton in the abstract, as a case study of the sort of President that modern politics tends to produce—which is, as it happens, exactly the same sort of political-point-shaving pol Bradley sees in his pre-1990 self. "The forces operate to produce a President who is that way," he told me. "I think it's helpful to draw a distinction between two types of politics: the politics of principle and the politics of moving the thing forward." This latter type of politics, Bradley noted, is most prevalent in the South, and dominates the process by which one reaches the Presidency. "It is a politics that says principles are dangerous, not just divisive but dangerous, so don't talk about them. Fuzz it up, get everybody in the room and pass out the goodies to the different groups, and let's just keep it moving forward."

So does that mean Bradley is planning to challenge Clinton for the Democratic Party's nomination in 1996? Don't ask.

"It's not that that's not a good question but it's a question focussed on process, and for a long time I spent a lot of time thinking about process, and therefore lost voice. I figure if you have voice, then process takes care of itself. Will people never interview me if I am not a Presidential candidate? Well, that's the kind of risk I have to take. I'm not prepared to say that unless I run for President no one will ever listen to what I say."

In fact, some of Bradley's recent remarks, particularly his National Press Club denunciation of the country's craving for a knight on a white horse, suggest a disillusionment with the very idea that a single individual, no matter how strong that individual's leadership qualities may be, can make the difference. Elaboration on this point comes straight from the heart of the ambivalent man. "Because I happen to occupy a particular position at a particular time means I get a microphone at the Press Club," Bradley says. "So I have an obligation to speak the truth. However, my speaking the truth as I see it at the Press Club, laying something out for people, doesn't make it happen. If what I say activates some people, wonderful. But ultimately what I am saying is that the citizens themselves have to assume that responsibility. The leader—maybe not the hero but the leader—is necessary but not sufficient to this process."

Then is he saying that there is no point in running for President at all?

That turns out to be not quite the case, either. Bradley is very quick to articulate a whole list of reasons that one should run for the highest office: "Because there is always the possibility in the system that the moment and the person coincide to allow genuine and transcending leadership. Because the potential is there. Because the federal government of the United States is the most important force in the governments of the world, and it is therefore very important who is the President of the United States." About the business of being President, Bradley acknowledges (using his euphemism for the hated celebrity-word) that "there is a certain element of the well-knownness phenomenon," but he adds that "there is also a genuine aspect to it, I think."

I asked Bradley how he thought one might make a run for President without becoming the sort of false hero he decries.

"By telling the truth," he replied. "Telling people what they might not want to hear but what on reflection they would have to say is something that they would at least think about more."

"And this is what you are trying to do now?"

"This is what I'm trying to do now, with the full awareness that it is a problematical enterprise and that in doing something like this you are operating maybe on the margins. Nevertheless, this is what gives a fullness to my own service at the moment."

"This is a sort of experiment, a testing process, to see if it is possible for you, personally, to use this truthtelling role to become a legitimate leader?"

"Yes, as long as you don't take it to the next step. Yes, I want to see if this makes a difference to anybody. Maybe it doesn't make any difference to anybody. I will know that in time by the reactions: whether people find what I say interesting or moving or thought-provoking, or whether they are simply bored. . . . And it is uncertain that it can be done. But, you know, this is a moment in my life to try it."

Bill Bradley still hasn't quite developed that final sense of who he is. But, in his introspective, ambivalent, and oddly calculating way, he is getting there. And it is worth remembering that for Bradley the point of getting there has always been to win. ♦

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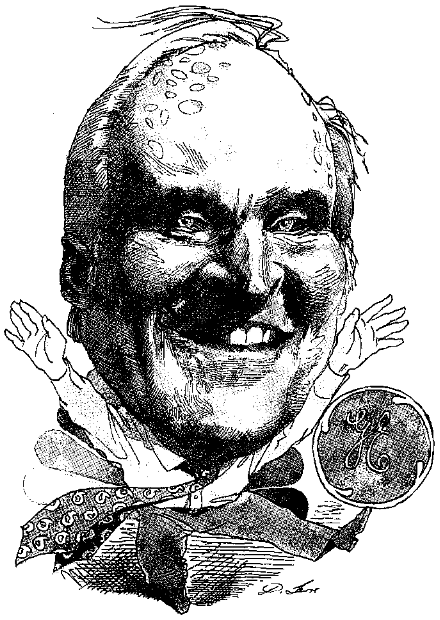
ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

# THE RACE FOR A GLOBAL NETWORK

*G.E.'s Jack Welch was trying to unload NBC. But now NBC has a strategy, while CBS reels from Howard Stringer's departure.*

BY KEN AULETTA

IN the corporate jungle, Jack Welch has emerged as a lion. Welch, the chairman and chief executive officer of General Electric, is a former chemical engineer who has made G.E. into a sixty-billion-dollar global behemoth, which since 1986 has included NBC. Under Welch, G.E. has become America's No. 1 corporate earner (six billion dollars in 1994), and its earnings last year grew by twenty-two per cent. Welch has always wanted to win, to dominate, and his competitive nature comes forth even in interviews. He springs at reporters, demanding that they ask their toughest questions. One moment, he radiates charm; the next, he flashes his blue eyes and attacks with questions of his own.



*Jack Welch: Many NBC executives say that he is eager to eclipse Rupert Murdoch.*

DAVID LEVINE

Since G.E. acquired NBC, Welch has been alternately pleased with its successes and so disappointed that he has tried to sell it. For much of the past year, however, he has seemed relatively at ease. He maintains that he is satisfied with the network's growth strategy, with relaxed government rules that allow the networks to earn more money, and with NBC's expansion under the presidency of his friend and longtime G.E. colleague Robert Wright. "The changing financial syndication rules, the success in globalization, the strength of the NBC management team—all these factors convinced us that NBC was a great growth opportunity, equal to many others in the company," he says. Welch's thoughts are no longer dominated by embarrassing memories of such things as the rigged truck crash on the NBC newsmagazine show "Dateline," the loss of David Letterman to CBS, NBC's falling into third place in the prime-time ratings, and the effort to keep Rupert Murdoch's Fox network from signing up NBC-affiliated stations. Today, Welch, who is fifty-nine years old, spends a lot of time extolling the accomplishments of NBC.

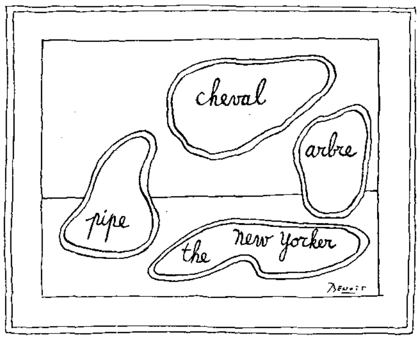
"Jack is having fun," says Andrew Lack, the president of NBC News. "He calls me all the time. He loves the new studio"—a street-level studio with an abundance of spectators, in Rockefeller Center, that was opened in June of 1994. "He loves the events that go on in front of the studio. The high profile of NBC was a headache for him for a while. It's not a headache now."

Any headaches that Welch had been feeling may have been eased somewhat by the media developments of the past two weeks. At the end of February, he saw a network competitor, CBS, sink deeper into a morass when it lost its Broadcast Group president, Howard Stringer, who is leaving to head a new media-programming service being formed by three regional telephone companies under the tutelage of Michael Ovitz, the chairman of the Creative Artists Agency. And, days earlier, he saw NBC gain at least a temporary truce with its worldwide rival, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, when it suspended a legal challenge to Murdoch in return for access to Murdoch's satellite-delivered television in Asia—an agreement that furthered Welch's aim of making NBC a worldwide brand name. Many NBC executives say that Welch is eager to eclipse Murdoch, who has already created the first global entertainment-and-news network. Now that G.E. has owned NBC for eight years, Welch believes that Bob Wright and his team can make NBC the world's foremost network. He wants NBC to become as important in its field as G.E. is in most of its eleven other businesses, which include light bulbs, medical systems, and jet engines. Since Welch became G.E.'s chairman and C.E.O., in 1981, he has followed one rule assiduously: If a division can't be No. 1 or No. 2 in its business worldwide, sell it. Welch feels that in Bob Wright he has a kindred spirit.

NBC already has a baby global network. Over breakfast in his spacious office, on the fifty-second floor of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, Wright, a personable man of fifty-one, noted that NBC had recently bought or joined forces with a number of international distribution systems: NBC in Asia, which made the pact with Murdoch to carry two NBC channels on his satellite; NBC Super Channel in Europe and the Middle East; Canal de Noticias NBC and TV Azteca in Central and South America. Wright also boasts that these international investments, combined with NBC's ownership of or investment in twenty-one domestic cable services, have increased the asset value of NBC "dramatically—to the tune of probably two billion dollars." He knows that he is following a trail already blazed by Murdoch at Twentieth Century Fox: manufacturing a brand-name product and multiplying its value by distributing and promoting its programs on a worldwide television network. Murdoch and his News Corporation did this by linking the Fox studio, network, and library with his Sky TV in Europe and his Star TV satellite system in Asia. Why should G.E., a company at least six times the size of Murdoch's News Corporation, cede dominance in the worldwide communications revolution to Murdoch? That's the question Wright has posed, and it is one that has aroused the competitive spirit in Jack Welch.

Of the three traditional networks, Capital Cities/ABC is the leader. It is the most profitable, has the best stations and cable holdings, has created the most software, and has made the most overseas production alliances. But ABC has chosen not to own a worldwide distribution system. CBS, under Laurence Tisch, has shed almost all its former holdings and has narrowed its focus to a single domestic broadcast business, which may soon be sold. Of the three, only NBC is trying to build its own worldwide distribution network. This was the backdrop to the negotiations between NBC and Ted Turner, which began in 1993 and publicly collapsed in January, because of disagreement over who would control the merged entertainment giant. Welch and Wright were trying to leap over Murdoch by joining NBC with Turner's CNN and his satellite-delivered entertainment channel (TNT), his production capabilities (Castle Rock Entertainment and New Line Cinema), plus the thirty-four hundred titles in his film library, and his worldwide cartoon network. "If NBC had joined with Ted, it would have caught Rupert," says John Malone, who is the chief executive officer of Tele-Communications, Inc., the nation's largest cable company, which owns nearly a quarter of Turner Broadcasting and is a partner of Murdoch's in several ventures. "They would have married a domestic broadcast network to worldwide cable networks. It's all about trying to catch Rupert. He's the guy out in the lead. The broad strategy is to take the programming you create and to exploit it as a worldwide business by using facilities that you own. To become vertically integrated worldwide—that's the game."

So Welch has now said that NBC is not for sale, and thus leaves CBS as the lone network seeking a buyer. "I don't believe that Jack has any interest in selling NBC," says a prospective buyer who has talked with Welch. This suitor, like others, would love to own a network, because in the last few years the perception has grown that the networks are increasingly valuable—for the moment, at least. Although network viewing is expected to drop, many people believe that, with the proliferation of channel choices and other computer and video-on-demand options, familiar brand names will still stand out. Potential buyers or investors are interested not in a traditional network per se but in how they can use it—as an advertising tool, as a promotional platform for introducing other shows, as a showcase for building product names, like NBC's "Seinfeld," and as a familiar brand name itself—like NBC—for a line of products that can be merchandised and sold globally. "The network business is a very tough business, and that has not changed," Wright says. "In our opinion, you've got to be in more than the network business."



THROUGHOUT the latter half of the nineteen-eighties, when NBC was the ratings leader and, together with the stations it owns, generated annual profits of as much as five hundred million pretax dollars, Welch was pleased. But in the early nineties, as profits shrank, he soured on NBC. The network suffered its first money-losing year under G.E. in 1991. In late 1992, Welch came close to selling a majority interest in NBC to Paramount. And, without Wright's knowledge, he was still shopping the network in the winter of 1993, when NBC's "Dateline" was caught rigging the test crash of a General Motors truck, and Michael Gartner, the president of NBC News, instead of apologizing, responded like a quibbling defense counsel. After an internal investigation, Gartner resigned, and was soon replaced by Andrew Lack, a CBS producer. In April of 1993, when Lack's appointment was announced, Welch told NBC's employees, "NBC is not for sale. G.E. wants to be part of NBC." Then, with an uncharacteristic defensiveness, he said, "I guess some might feel that's bad news, but I hope not."

Still, Welch apparently didn't stop peddling the network. Dick Ebersol, the president of NBC Sports, remembers attending a New York Knicks playoff game in May of 1993 and wondering why Martin Davis, the C.E.O. of Paramount, which then owned the Knicks, wasn't at the game. Ebersol says that he later learned that Davis and Welch were off negotiating that night. Welch also

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# Canada

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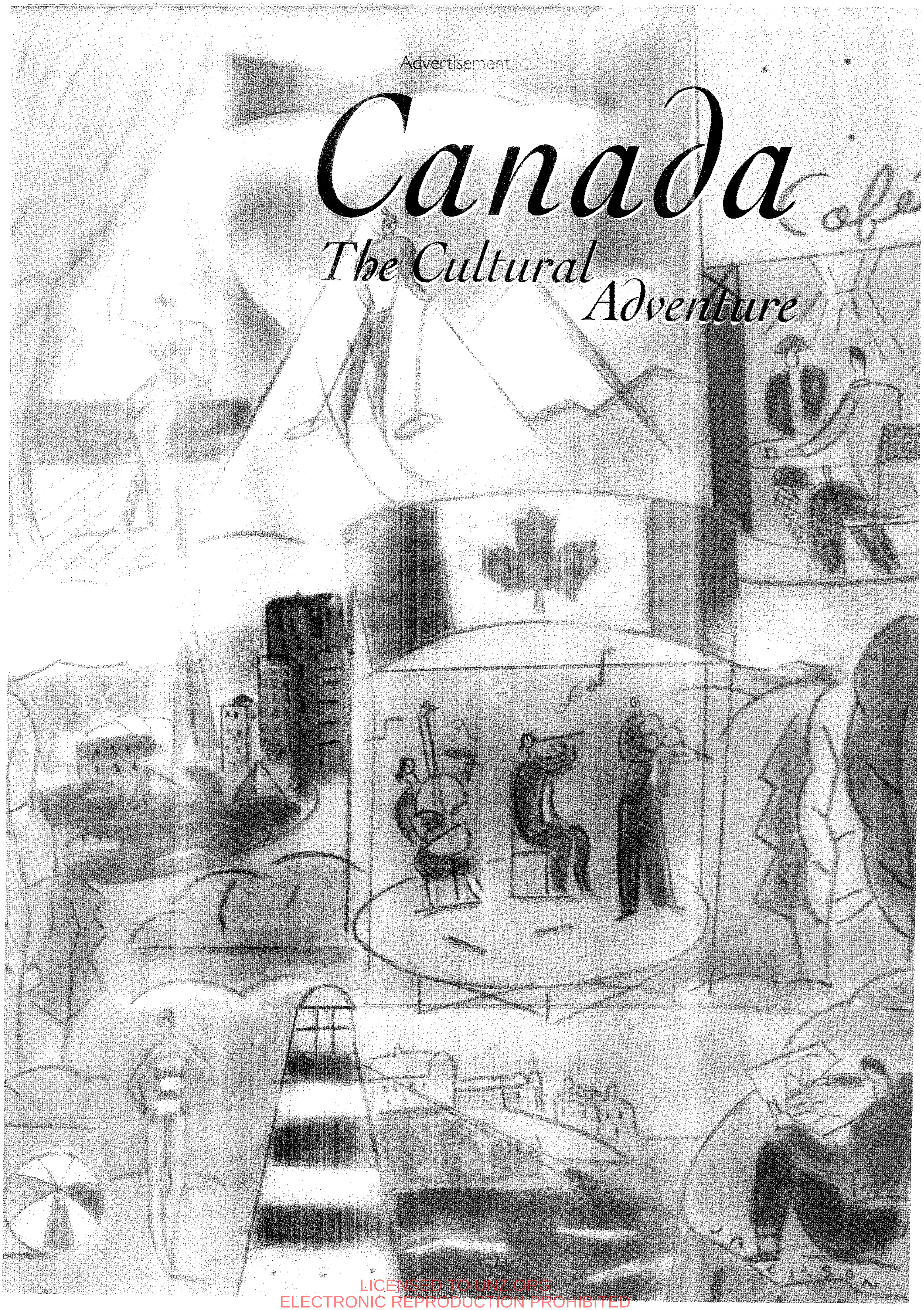

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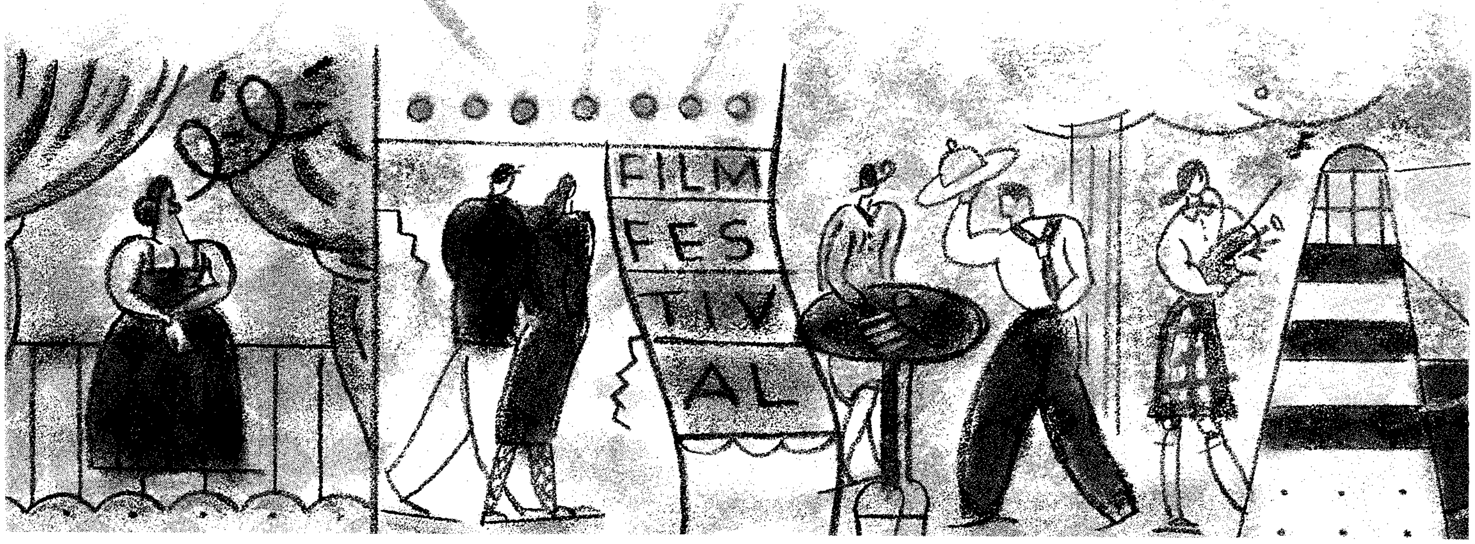
*All illustrations and maps by Jeff Jackson*



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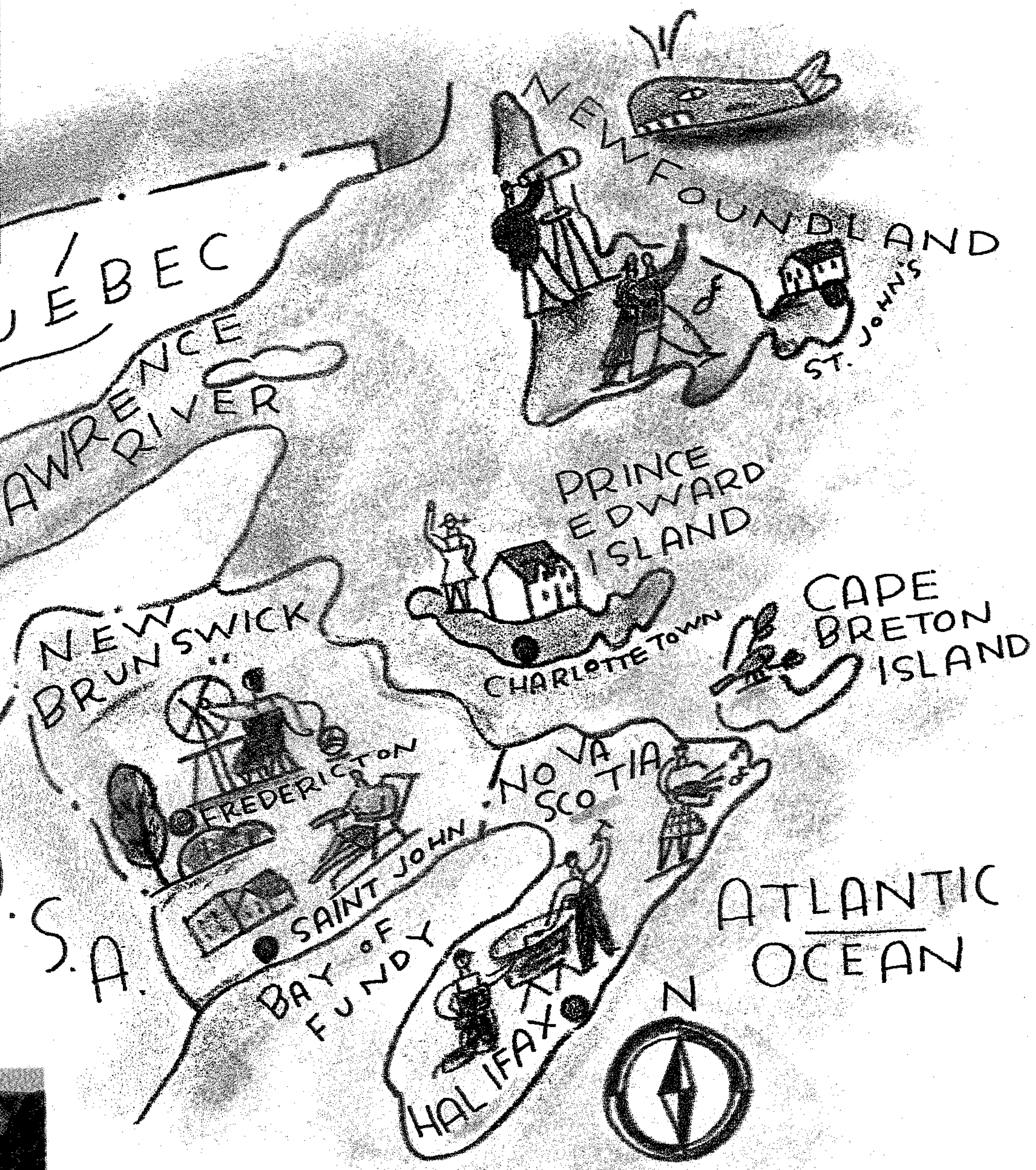
# Atlantic Region

## Coasting Home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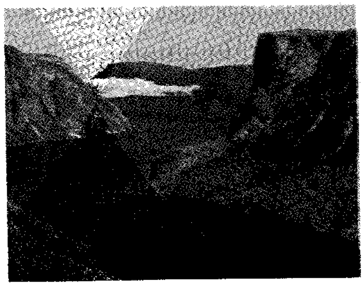
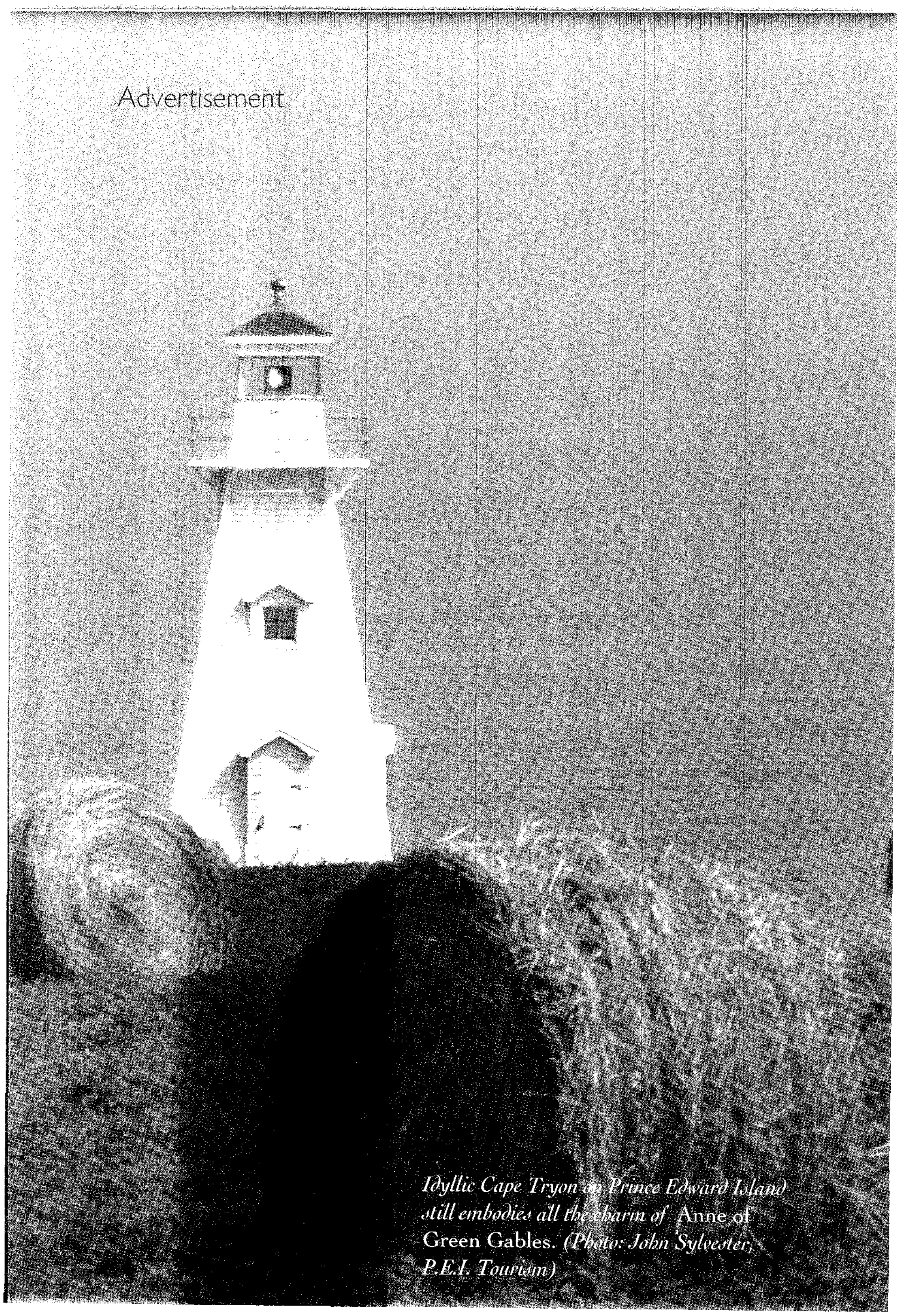


*Campbell's Pond. (Photo: John Sylvester, P.E.I. Tourism)*

*Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland. (Photo: Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador)*

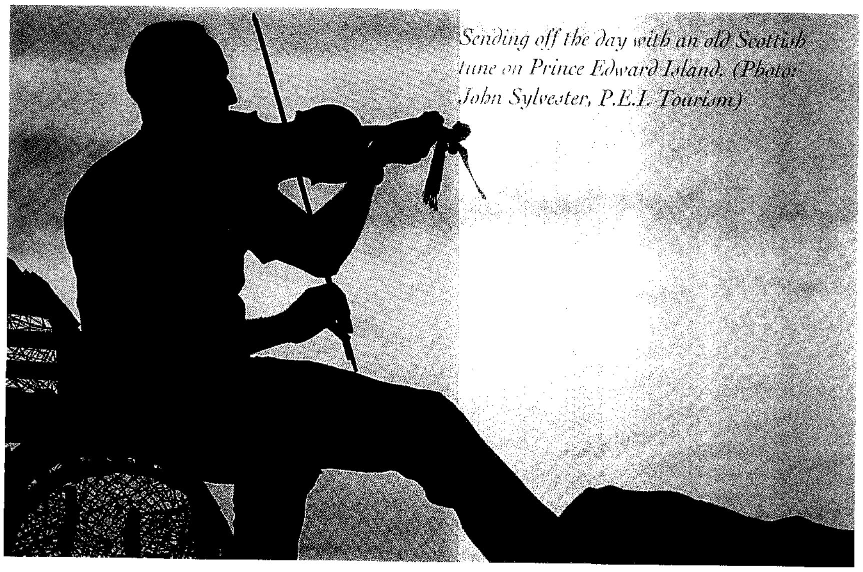


*Idyllic Cape Tryon on Prince Edward Island still embodies all the charm of* Anne of Green Gables. *(Photo: John Sylvester, P.E.I. Tourism)*

Canada is a country of infinite facets and serendipitous contradictions, and its diversity is perhaps most concentrated in the Atlantic provinces.

With thousands of miles of running coastline between them, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island share a salty, seafaring history. Fresh-caught lobsters and the weathered pastel fishing villages await the seaside-loving tourist, and those who venture deeper into the region's culture will find themselves with plenty to do.

A summer trip to Newfoundland – whose rugged beauty matches the fierce independence of its inhabitants – is even more than hiking in spectacular parks or whale watching among the icebergs. Place yourself among the clapboard houses [illegible] John's during the first week in August, and dance to traditional Celtic music at the Newfoundland & Labrador Folk Festival.



*Sending off the day with an old Scottish tune on Prince Edward Island. (Photo: John Sylvester, P.E.I. Tourism)*

In New Brunswick, fully a third of the residents speak French, a testament to the tenacity of the region's earliest settlers, the Acadiens, and their centuries-long struggle with the British for sovereignty. Have an exotic time at the Festival Acadien de Caraquet, where the ten days of performances culminate in the Acadien national celebration "La Tintamarre" – which translates to "joyful noise."

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Antigonish, N.S.
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**Summerside Lobster Carnival**
Handicrafts and horticulture
Summerside, P.E.I.
*July 16-22*

**Newfoundland & Labrador Folk Festival**
A cultural showcase
St. John's, Nfld.
*August 4-6*

**Festival Acadien de Caraquet**
Theatre and performing arts
Caraquet, N.B.
*August 4-15*

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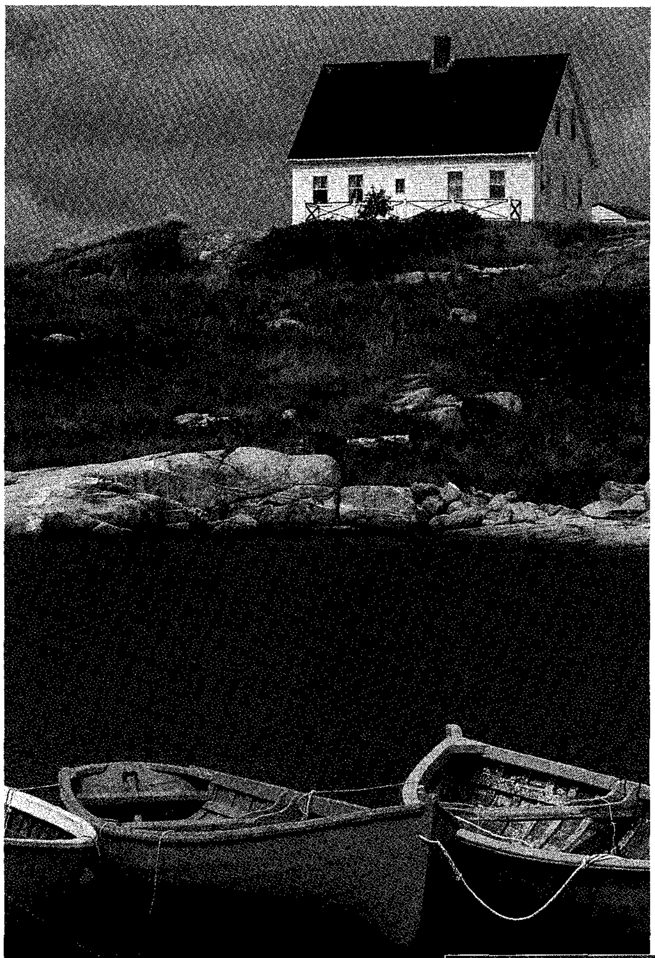
New Brunswick, with eighty-five percent of its lands forested, offers a spectacular display of fall foliage. Another natural wonder here is the Bay of Fundy. Stand on its red-clay shore, watch the rushing fifty-foot tides, and think about ... chocolate? Yes! Young and old will find the Chocolate Festival in nearby St. Stephen a tantalizing, palate-teasing treat.

In contrast to its rocky neighbors, tiny Prince Edward Island is lush and rolling, its farmland acres surrounded by the warmest ocean waters north of Florida. Spend your time at a secluded strip of sandy beach, or a first-class resort, but don't miss Cavendish, made famous as the setting of the children's story *Anne of Green Gables*. Each



*A lakeside cottage captures a serene beauty. (Photo: Kevin Schafer, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

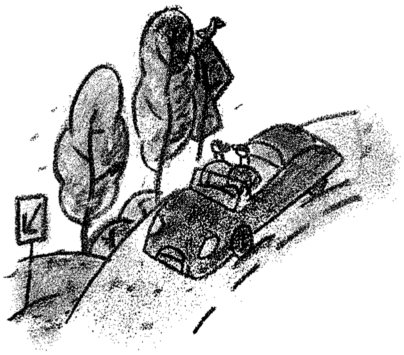
*Historic Acadien village in New Brunswick reflects a quiet simplicity. (Photo: A. Gallant for Tourism New Brunswick )* summer at Charlottetown, Canada's largest festival of musical theatre mounts a production based on those stories, and a host of others.

Possibly the most diverse of all the Atlantic provinces is Nova Scotia. Its original inhabitants, as elsewhere in the region, were the Micmac Indians. But waves of Germans, British and Scots have left their mark, lending the capital of Halifax an international sophistication.

But a look beyond that cosmopolitan center allows visitors to experience the full flavor of life in "New Scotland."

Watch descendants of the region's German settlers as they compete to build – and sail – a boat from scratch in under three hours, at the Mahone Bay Wooden Boat Festival. Or, exult in Scottish culture at the Antigonish Highland Games in mid-July. There's step dancing, bagpipe bands, and exotic sporting events like the "caber toss," all to be taken in while eating Haggis and drinking Scotch whiskey, as tasty here as they are in the homeland itself.

*Where else in the world can you find warm ocean waters, whales on ice, and a city of chocolate?*



*Jazz heats up a bright summer afternoon in Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Photo: Nova Scotia Tourism)*

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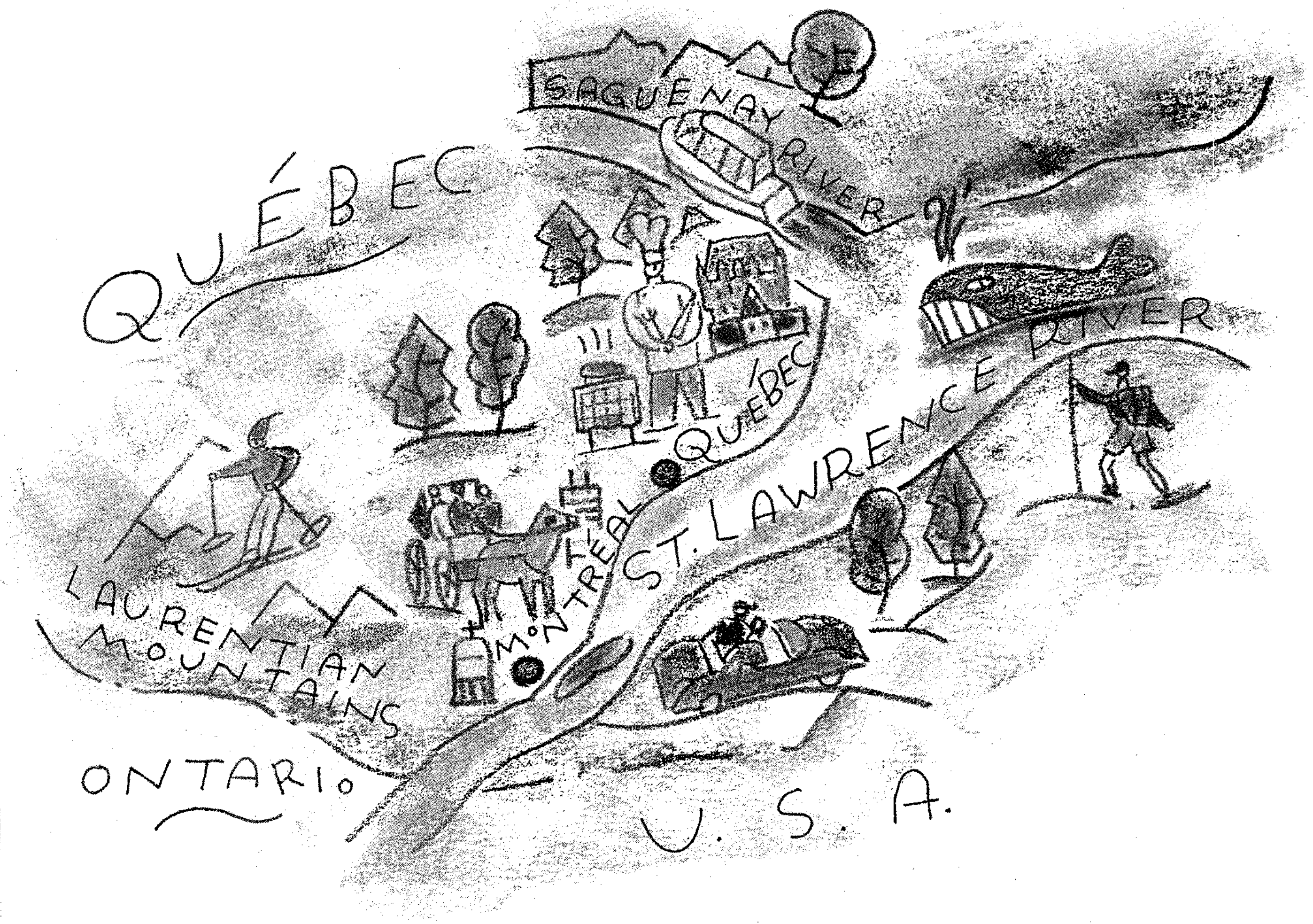
# Québec

## Vive Le Fun

Montréal, Québec's most cosmopolitan city, can be as hot as a Manhattan nightclub on a Saturday night, or as cool as a Paris jazz bistro. The city, with its continental cuisine, primarily French-speaking residents and the latest in shopping, theatre, and museums, offers the best of all worlds.

And even though Montréal is "très chic," it manages to offer the uncanny combination of stimulation without stress. Note the friendly neighborhoods, the down-to-earth prices. Take a peaceful nighttime walk or wander the cobbled streets and impressive churches of Old Montréal, pausing for a moment or two to watch the city lights twinkle in the harbor.


SAGUENAY RIVER
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QUÉBEC
ST. LAWRENCE RIVER
MONTRÉAL
LAURENTIAN MOUNTAINS
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FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL

In June and July, the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal (Montréal Jazz Festival) features more than 350 concerts, the majority of them free, and held in a closed-off section of downtown. This venue has long been a must for jazz greats from Miles Davis to Ella Fitzgerald.

Also lighting up summertime is the Festival de Théâtre des Amériques (Québec Drama Festival), with its focus on innovative and avant-garde productions. Later in the season, the town hosts Just for Laughs, the world's largest comedy festival.

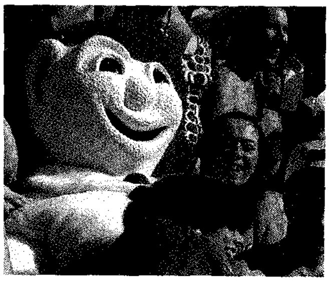
Smaller than Montréal but breathtakingly picturesque, Québec City is the heart of Canada's French-speaking culture. The steep, winding streets of the Old City, chockfull of antique shops and outdoor cafés, are reminiscent of a European capital; in the warmer months, local artists offer their wares outdoors along the Rue du Trésor. Hop aboard a "calèche" – as the elegant horse-drawn carriages that tour the city are called – to truly feel transported back in time. Visit the massive, turreted Château Frontenac, built as a continental-style castle in the 1800s, which dominates the city from its perch high above the St. Lawrence River. Strolling the lamplit Dufferin Terrace, look down onto the eighteenth-century stone-houses of the Lower Town.

*Opposite page: Québec City's Medieval Festival. (Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier)*

*Above: Montréal celebrates summer in outdoor cafés. (Photo: André Cornellier)*

*Bottom right: Winter festivals invite warm smiles. (Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier)*

*Top right: World-class musicians headline at the Festival Int'l de Jazz de Montréal. (Photo: Mathieu Lamarre)*



## *Experience the delightful culture of a small French village in the big, open heart of Québec.*

To really get close to Québec's French roots, stay for the Festival d'Eté International de Québec (Québec International Summer Festival). Its four hundred free shows, performed outdoors in the heart of the Old City, draw visitors from around the world.

But the province of Québec offers more than just urban elegance. Travelers who want to mix city spark with country comfort have found a haven here. Venture west from Montréal to the peaceful Laurentian mountains, where lakeside chalets provide family-style repose in both summer and winter, or north from Québec City through the verdant hills of Charlevoix. In late September, the Rêves D'Automne Festival

FESTIVAL D'ETE DE QUEBEC
FESTIVAL D'ETE DE QUEBEC

*The performing arts take center stage at Québec's International Summer Festival. (Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier)*

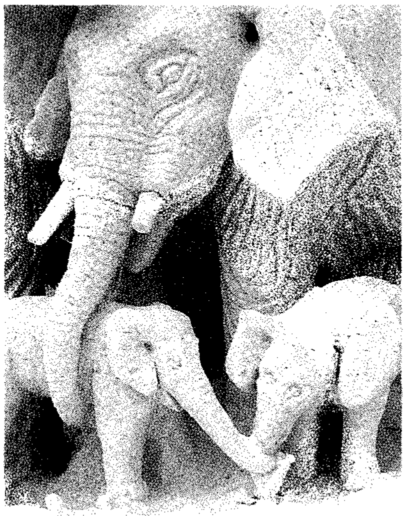
Advertisement

*The steep roofs in Place Royale illustrate how the first European settlers adapted to heavy winter snow in Québec. (Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier)*

(Autumn Dreams Festival) celebrates this region's natural beauty, hospitality, and "bonne table": French cuisine with a modern flair. Further north enjoy whale-watching trips and cruises into the stunning, wild fjords of the Saguenay River.

There are in fact few places better suited to the traveler seeking European charm so close to home.

*Québec City's Chemin St. Louis. (Photo: Robin Smith, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*



*Ice sculptures in Québec City. (Photo: Art Wolf, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

**FESTIVAL DE THÉÂTRE DES AMÉRIQUES**
Avant-garde theatre
Montréal, Qué.
*May 24-June 6*

**FESTIVAL INT'L DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL**
Celebrating the world's best jazz
Montréal, Qué.
*June 29-July 9*

**FESTIVAL D'ÉTÉ INT'L DE QUÉBEC**
Street concerts and performing arts
Québec, Qué.
*July 6-16*

**JUST FOR LAUGHS**
International comedy festival
Montréal, Qué.
*July 20-30*

**FESTIVAL DES FILMS DU MONDE - MONTRÉAL**
Major international film premieres
Montréal, Qué.
*August 25-September 5*

**RÊVES D'AUTOMNE À BAIE-SAINT-PAUL**
Celebration of culture and good food
Baie-Saint-Paul, Qué.
*September 22-October 1*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**QUÉBEC 1-800-363-7777**

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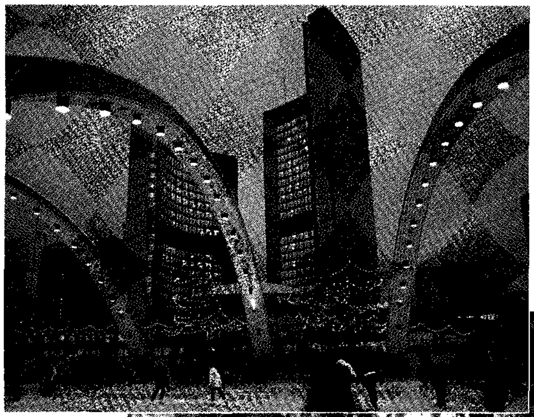
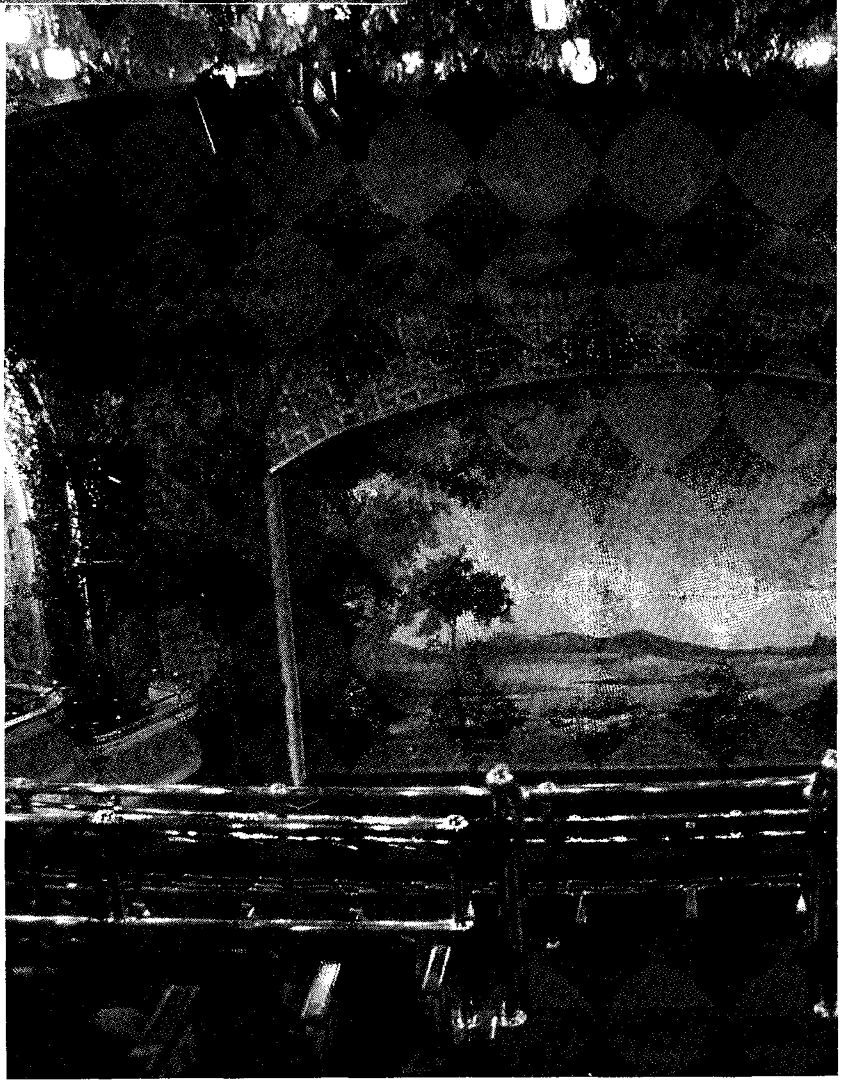
# *Ontario*

## *The Charming Sophisticate*



*Left: Toronto's Nathan Ice Rink. (Photo: Guy Marche, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

*Below: Theatre in Toronto is a spectacle of many arts. (Photo: The Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation)*



Canada's most populous province, Ontario boasts everything from big-city sophistication to old-fashioned country charm.

Toronto, a vibrant city of three million, has risen to international prominence as the host of such world-class events as the Toronto International Film Festival, the Du Maurier Jazz Festival, and the International Authors' Festival at the Harbourfront arts complex.

SkyDome, home to the champion Toronto Blue Jays, is also used as a venue for big-name performances from rock and roll to grand opera.

Museums and galleries abound here. The collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario ranges from old masters to contemporary Canadian works. The Royal Ontario Museum features everything from dinosaurs to the mummies of ancient Egypt.

Whether you desire fine British woolens or handcrafted jewelry, Toronto offers a diversity of shopping choices that range from small, trendy boutiques to the delights of the World's Biggest Bookstore.

The third largest theatre center in the English-speaking world (next only to New York and London), the city, bordered by Lake Ontario, is currently staging such mega-musicals as *Phantom of the*

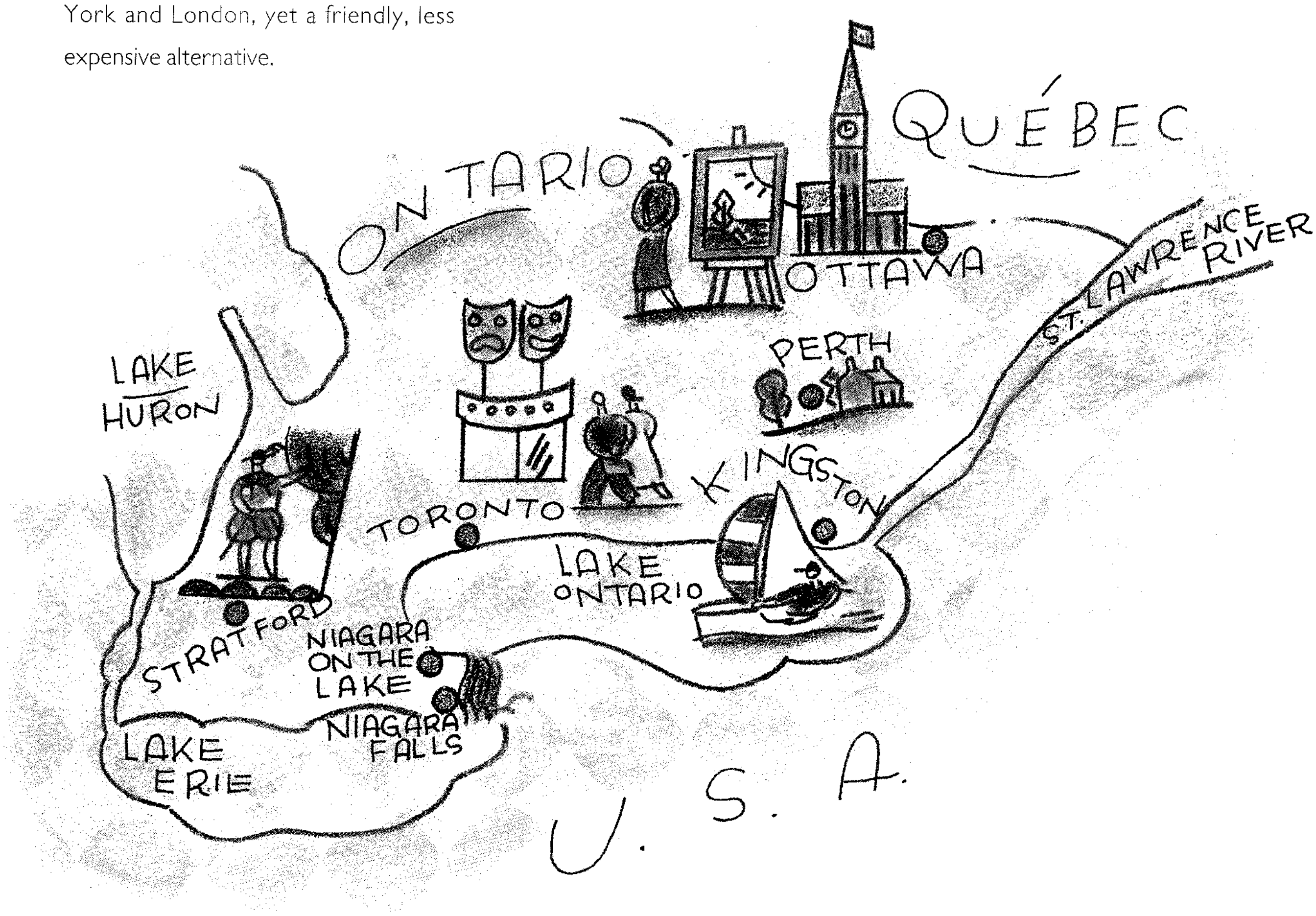
*Opera*, *Show Boat* and *Tommy*. Andrew Lloyd Weber's smash hit *Sunset Boulevard* will open this year. Yet as visitors to the more personal realm of live drama will see, these big shows have not stifled the town's tradition of small, experimental theatre.

In 1994, a record 133 movies and TV programs were filmed in Toronto, earning the city the nickname, "Hollywood of the North." The current favorable exchange rate makes this city a cosmopolitan look-alike of New York and London, yet a friendly, less expensive alternative.

Les Misérables

*Royal Alexander Theatre, Toronto. (Photo: F. Cattroll/Industry, Science and Technology Canada)*

*Fast-paced adventure on the Ottawa River. (Photo: The Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation)*


ONTARIO
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NIAGARA FALLS
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**THE SHAW FESTIVAL**
Plays by George Bernard Shaw
and his contemporaries
Niagara-on-the-Lake
*April 12-October 29*

**GUELPH SPRING FESTIVAL**
Performing arts celebration
Guelph, Ont.
*April 28-May 14*

**STRATFORD FESTIVAL**
Canada's premier classical theatre
Stratford, Ont.
*May 1-October 29*

**FESTIVAL CARAVAN**
North America's largest
international festival
Toronto, Ont.
*June 16-24*

**DU MAURIER LTD. DOWNTOWN JAZZ**
1,500 international jazz artists
Toronto, Ont.
*June 23-July 2*

**GLENGARRY HIGHLAND GAMES**
North American pipe band
championships
Maxville, Ont.
*August 4-5*

**TORONTO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**
North America's premier film
festival
Toronto, Ont.
*September 7-16*

**NIAGARA GRAPE AND WINE FESTIVAL**
Grape harvest celebration
St. Catharines, Ont.
*September 15-24*

**THEATRE IN TORONTO**
***SHOW BOAT***
Ford Center for Performing Arts
*Through June 11*

***PHANTOM OF THE OPERA***
Pantages Theatre
*Currently playing*

***TOMMY***
Elgin Theatre
*Currently playing*

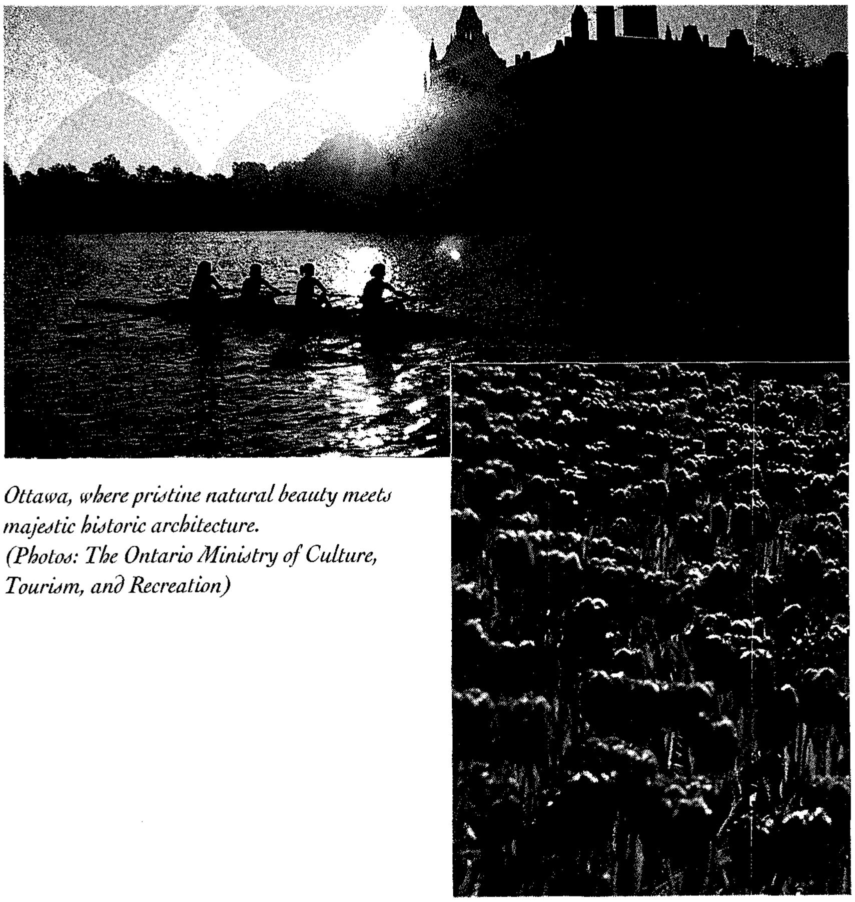
***MISS SAIGON***
Princess of Wales Theatre
*Through April 30*

***BEAUTY AND THE BEAST***
Princess of Wales Theatre
*Opens August 8*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
**ONTARIO**
**1-800-668-2746**

Only ninety miles from Toronto, regal swans glide peacefully on the Avon River in Stratford, home to the world-renowned Stratford Festival. Here, the largest classical repertory company in North America performs Shakespearean productions that the Bard himself would be proud of. A short side trip from majestic Niagara Falls can take you to scenic Niagara-on-the-Lake, where another festival pays tribute to George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries.

Ottawa, the nation's capital, hosts a spectacular display of springtime tulips, the legacy of a gift from the Queen of the Netherlands after World War II. For the Winterlude Festival in February five miles of the historic Rideau Canal become the world's longest outdoor skating rink. Home to the National Gallery, the Museum of Civilization, and the National War Museum, Ottawa also houses fascinating collections devoted to photography and technology. The city's downtown ByWard Market, with its jugglers and other street performers, mixes the color of an old-



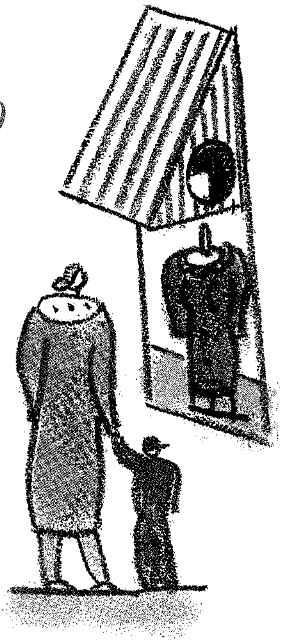
*Ottawa, where pristine natural beauty meets majestic historic architecture.*
*(Photos: The Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation)*

fashioned farmer's market with the appeal of fine dining and boutiques.

In Kingston, the gateway to the St. Lawrence River's Thousand Islands, world-class sailing is juxtaposed with the pageantry of Fort Henry's authentic nineteenth-century British garrison. Don't miss the Buskers' Rendezvous of outdoor musicians here in summer.

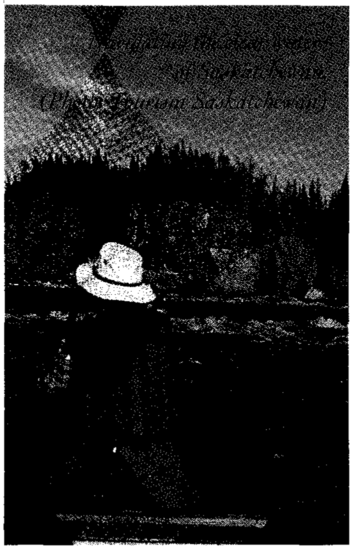
*Toronto may well be the world's perfect city with its unique blend of commerce and art.*

Indeed, Ontario — from the Iroquois word meaning "glittering water" — offers enough to make any vacation sparkle.



*Ottawa's Rideau Canal is a skater's paradise. (Photo: National Capital Commission)*

# The Prairies Don't Fence Me In



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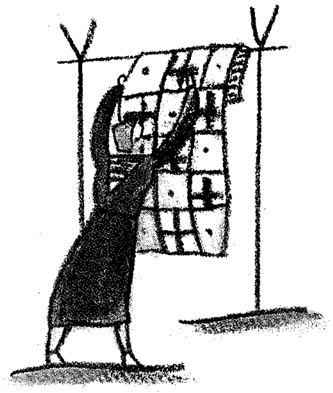
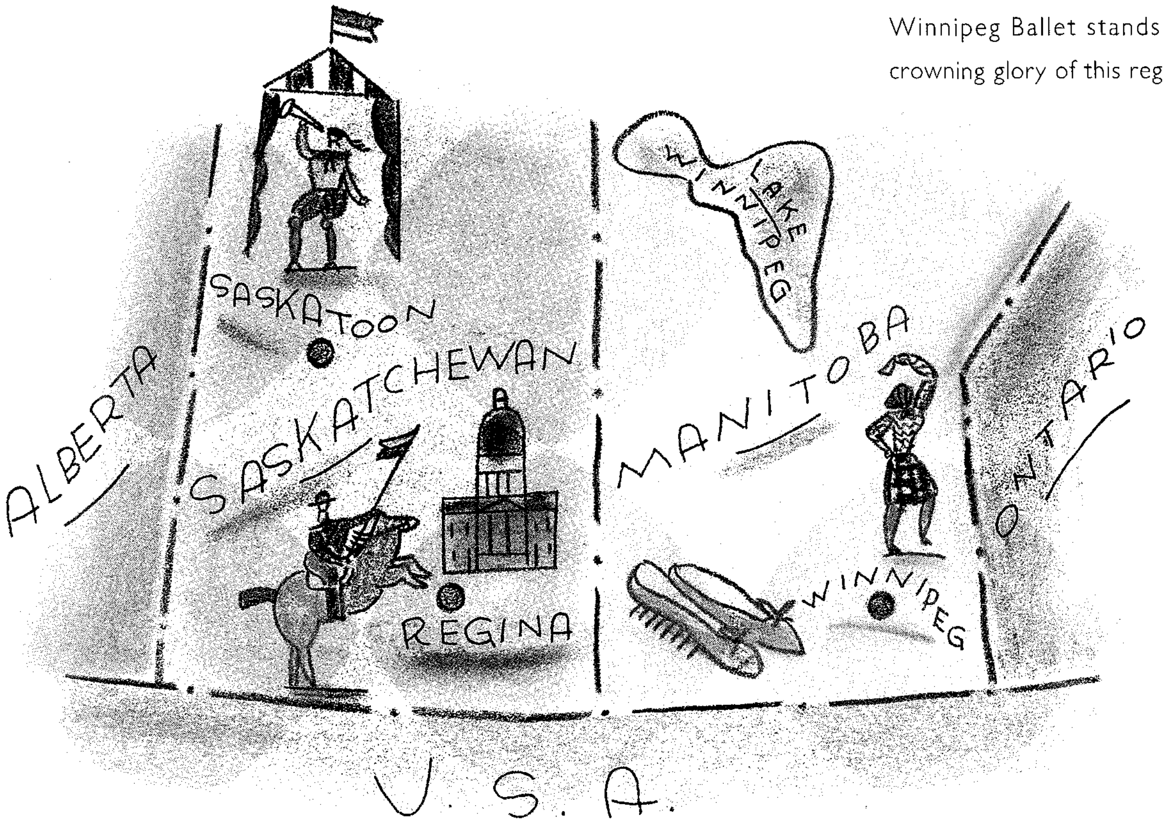


This year, the half-million square miles of Canada's prairies will seem barely large enough to hold all the action.

Steeped in a history of Ukrainian immigration, Manitoba hosts the three-day National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin in August. Dance to blood-stirring Slavic music and marvel at exquisite "pysanka" (eggshells dyed in intricate, jewel-like patterns).

Then make haste for Winnipeg, where Folklorama, the world's largest multicultural event, offers cooking, crafts, and entertainment from more than forty different cultures. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet stands out as the crowning glory of this region's artistic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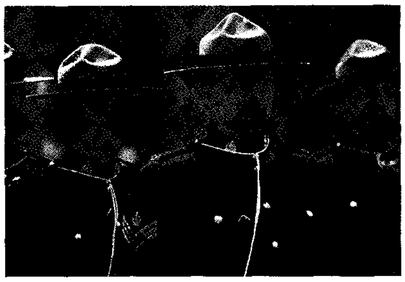


*The Mounties: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (Photo: Masa Uemura, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

life. This season, this second-oldest ballet company in North America will mount works by such great modern choreographers as Balanchine, Joffrey, and Tharp from March through May.

The immense skies of Saskatchewan, Canada's bread basket, are the visual essence of freedom. At the Sunset Ceremony of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Regina, the red-coated Mounties – who came to symbolize law and order by taming the West – delight visitors with a mixture of pageantry and tradition as they perform precision marching drills.

Finally, move from parade ground to proscenium, to enjoy "unpretentious Shakespeare – poetry and passions for people of all walks of life," as the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival is described by its artistic director, Henry Woolf. Performances at this summer theatre event take place in large tents on the banks of the scenic Saskatchewan River in Saskatoon. This season will feature performances of *Macbeth*, the *Comedy of Errors* (set to the music of modern Canadian composer Bruce Ruddell), and Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*.

**Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Pow Wow**
Native crafts and foods
Regina, Sask.
*April 1-2*

**Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival**
Excellent theatre in river bank tents
Saskatoon, Sask.
*July 6-August 20*

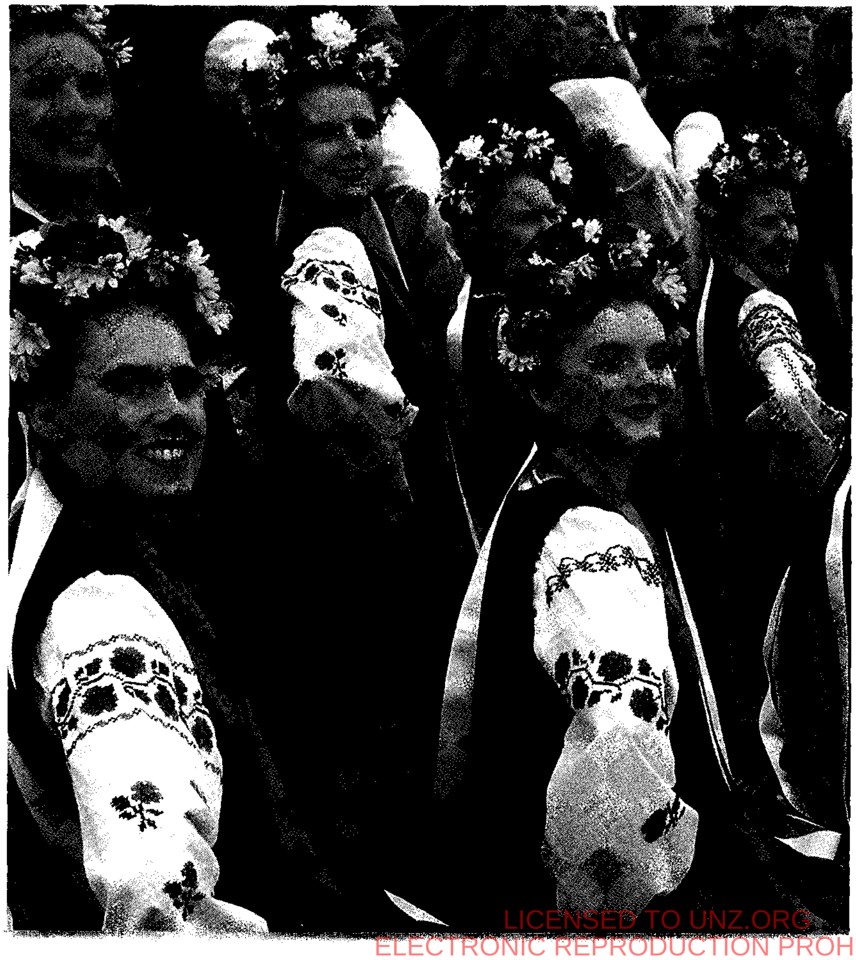
**A Taste of Manitoba**
A gastronome's delight
Winnipeg, Man.
*July 15-16*

**Canada's National Ukrainian Festival**
True flavour of Ukrainian traditions
Dauphin, Man.
*August 4-6*

**For More Information:**

**Manitoba 1-800-665-0040**

**Saskatchewan 1-800-667-7191**



*Ukrainian dancers bring their colorful heritage to life. (Photo: Natalie Fobes, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

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# Alberta

## Rocky Mountain High

High art and popular culture converge in Alberta against a backdrop of soaring mountains and rolling hills.

Amid the breathtaking peaks of the Rocky Mountains, strains of string quartets meet sounds of experimental electronic composers in early autumn at the Banff Festival of the Arts.

In the warmth of summer, cool off at glacier-fed Lake Louise, then head off to the provincial capital of Edmonton to confabulate with high-minded scribblers — or just sit and listen — at readings organized by the Stroll of Poets. Enthusiasts of the written word will also enjoy the Alberta Book Festival. If a glorious night at the opera is to your taste, revel in the Edmonton Opera's staging of Bizet's *Carmen*.

Children will enjoy festivals across the province that offer theatre, stories,

**CALGARY EXHIBITION AND STAMPEDE**
Wild West rodeo and stampede
Calgary, Alta.
*July 7-16*

**EDMONTON'S KLONDIKE DAYS**
Tribute to 1890s gold rush
Edmonton, Alta.
*July 20-29*

**SPRUCE MEADOWS MASTERS' TOURNAMENT**
Equestrian Masters' event
Calgary, Alta.
*September 6-10*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

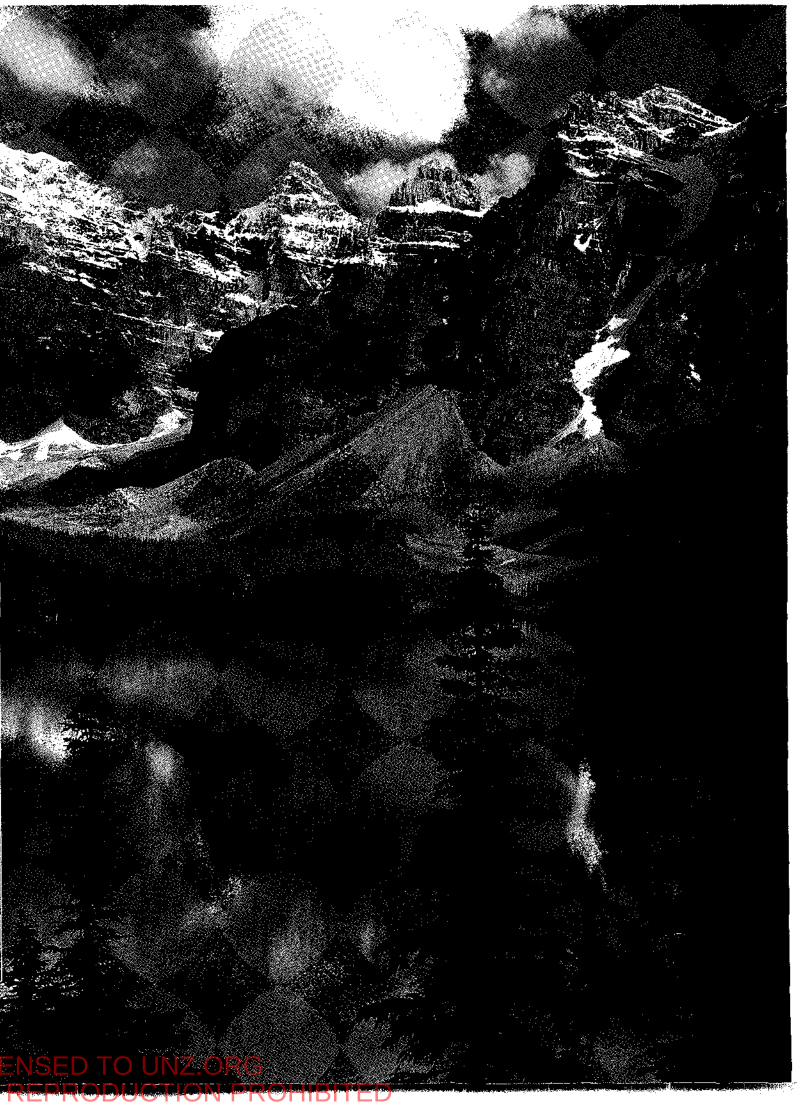
**ALBERTA** 1-800-661-8888

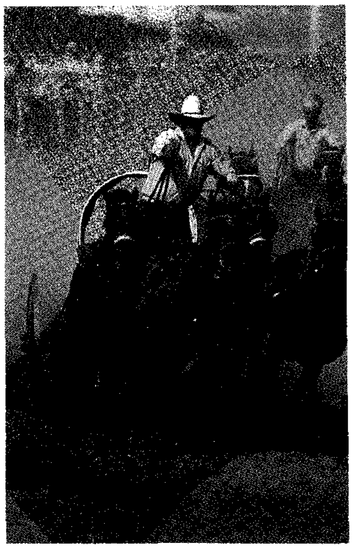
*Below: Golfers on the greens in Banff National Park. (Photo: Alberta Economic Development and Tourism)*

*Right: The rolling plains and wild towering mountains of Alberta serve as the backdrop for Tri-Star's new film* "Legends of the Fall." *(Photo: Darrell Gulin, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

*Opposite page, top: Calgary Stampede. (Photo: Brian Stablyk, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

*Opposite page, center: Calgary is a haven for shoppers. (Photo: Philip & Karen Smith, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

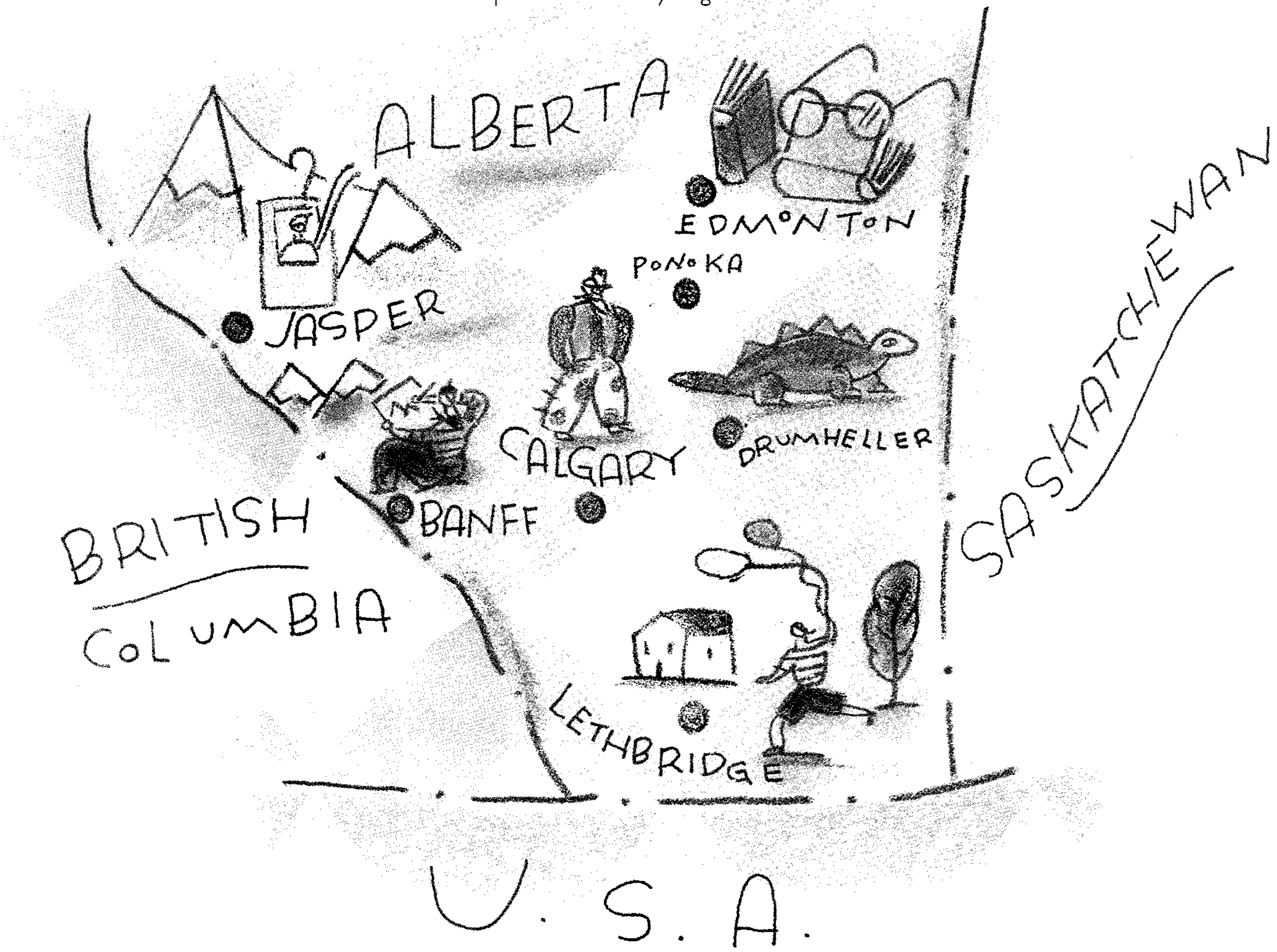




puppetry, and workshops at Lethbridge and Calgary. At the festival in Jasper, plays on stage can fill the evenings while play on the slopes fills the days. The Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology displays fossils from around the world and dinosaur bones found locally, in the surrounding Badlands. A visit there includes guided hikes, lectures, films, and interactive exhibits.

Looking for a more rugged style of fun? The soul of the West lies in Alberta's living cowboy tradition. The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is the most famous of the region's rodeos, but smaller, equally exciting events are held each year in authentic ranching towns such as Ponoka.

Bronco busting, calf roping, and barrel racing captivate both young and old. But what's the thrill for the cowboys and girls? Says one grinning 1994 champion: "It's a high; your horse is dancin' and prancin' and ready to go."


ALBERTA
EDMONTON
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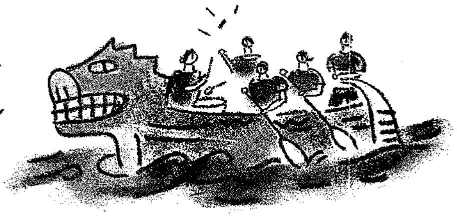
# British Columbia



## Pacific Playground

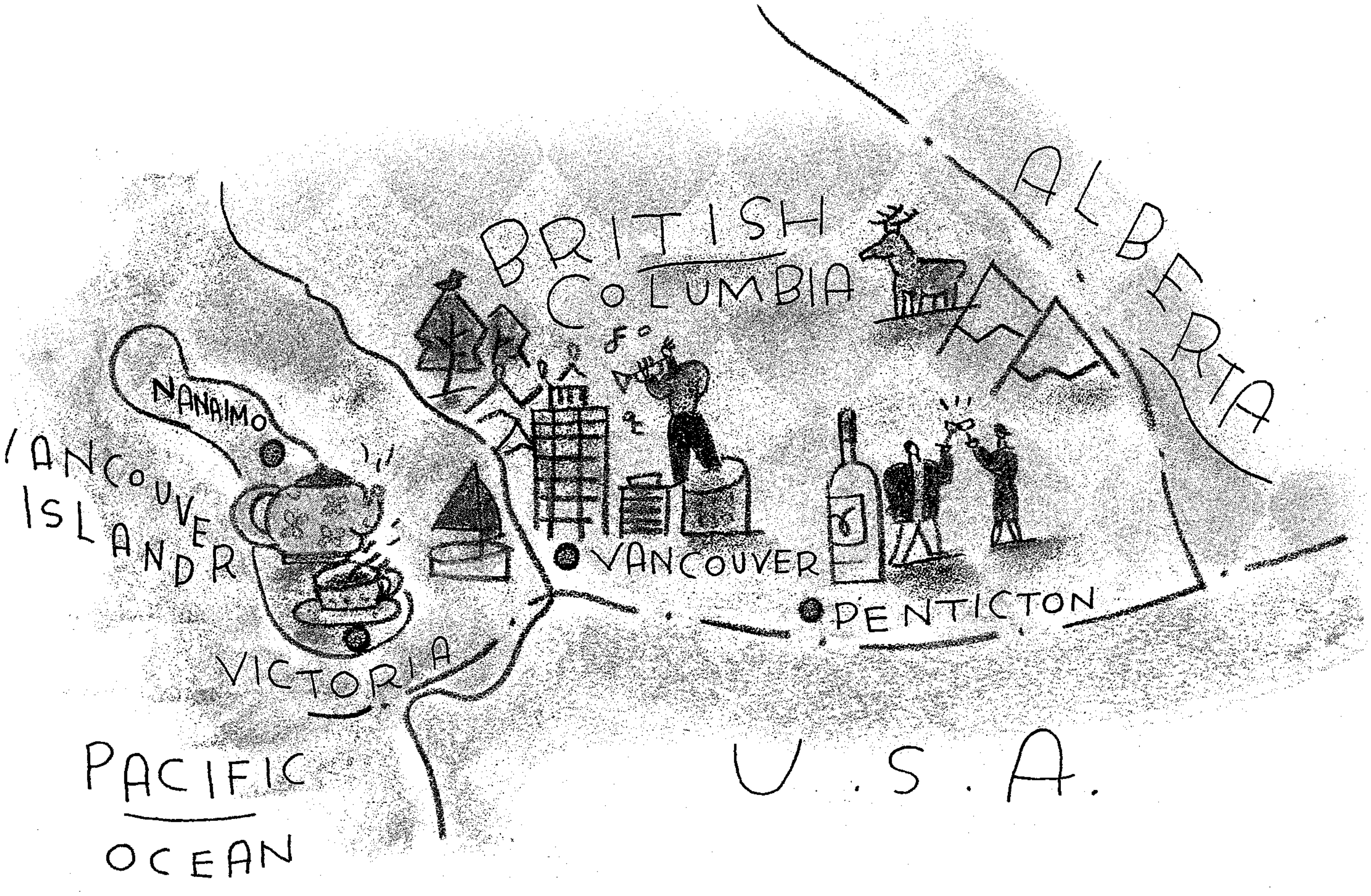
*Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology: an ingenious blend of old and new. (Photo: Tourism British Columbia)*

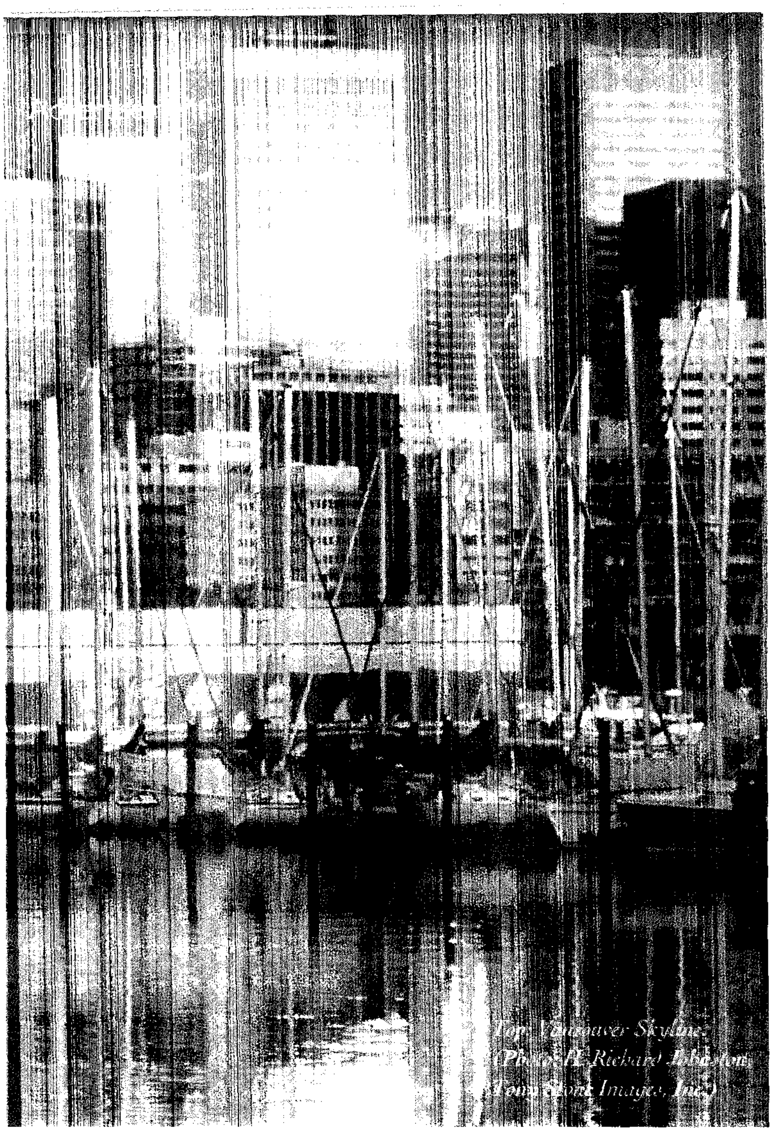
Nestled between the Rocky Mountains and the tumbling waves of the Pacific Ocean, British Columbia is a vacationer's playground.

Enjoy high-spirited feats of a nautical nature at the Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival in Vancouver, a food-filled, drum-pounding celebration of the Chinese influence in Canada's Northwest. On a lighter note, there's the madcap challenge of bathtub-boat races on a twenty-mile stretch of river from Nanaimo to Vancouver.

Nature lovers will be enthralled by the region's lush, jagged coastline, but steps away from the salt spray are the attractions of cosmopolitan Victoria and Vancouver. Follow up tea on the terrace of Victoria's Empress Hotel with an evening of Bach at the city's symphony orchestra. Or choose between the Vancouver Chamber Choir and a downtown nightclub swinging with sultry jazz.

Vancouver is fast becoming a haven for aficionados of the stage. The Ford Centre for Performing Arts will open





*Top: Vancouver Skyline. (Photo: H. Richard Johnston, Tony Stone Images, Inc.)*

downtown in December, 1995 with a new production of the hit musical *Show Boat*. And museum lovers can bone up on Pacific-boating history at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, or visit the Museum of Anthropology on the campus of the University of British Columbia. Children and adults alike will delight in the technological wonders of Science World, located on what was the site of the Expo '86 World's Fair. An unspoiled natural beauty, British Columbia served as the idyllic setting of a bygone era in the latest film version of "Little Women."

Inland from the oceanfront splendor, British Columbia is a haven of cultivation — seen most keenly at the Okanagan Valley's wine festival in Penticton. Visit a vineyard, taste this year's newest release, and celebrate your stay with a toast.

*Middle & Below: Traditional culture abounds from maypole dancers to logger sports. (Photos: Tourism British Columbia)*

**VANCOUVER CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**
Music, theatre, and puppetry
Vancouver, B.C.
*May 29-June 4*

**VANCOUVER INT'L JAZZ FESTIVAL**
Great jazz and blues
Vancouver, B.C.
*June 23-July 2*

**ABBOTSFORD INT'L AIRSHOW**
Aviation for enthusiasts and thrill-seekers
Abbotsford, B.C.
*August 11-13*

**OKANAGAN WINE FESTIVAL**
World class wine judging and tastings
Penticton, B.C.
*October 14-22*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
**BRITISH COLUMBIA**
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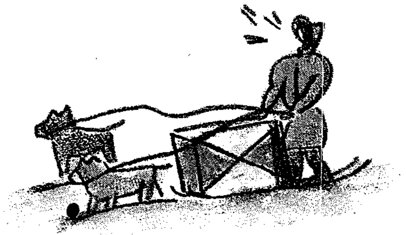
# *Yukon and the Northwest Territories*



## *Warm Welcome*

*Above: Discover relics of ancient Inuk culture. Below: Living tradition: an Inuk carver. (Photos: Dan Heringa, NWT Ecomomic Development and Tourism)*

**Caribou Carnival**
Canadian Championship Dog Derby
Yellowknife, NWT
*March 31-April 2*

**Yukon Gold Panning Championship**
Unusual competitions and gold panning
Dawson City, Yukon
*July 1*

**Folk on the Rocks**
Native music festival
Yellowknife, NWT
*July 15-16*

**Dawson City Discovery Days**
Commemorates Klondike gold discovery
Dawson City, Yukon
*August 18-21*

**For More Information:**
**Northwest Territories:**
**1-800-661-0788**

**Yukon 1-403-667-5340**

The immense spaces of Canada's North – from the wooded river valleys of the Yukon to the stark tundra of the Northwest Territories – lend special significance to its cultural gatherings. Here, old friends meet across the miles, and the adventurous visitor is welcomed into their circle.

Summer is the time to be in Dawson City, center of the 1896-98 gold rush, where "cheechakos," or outsiders, can test their skill in the Yukon gold-panning championship. Or get into the carnival spirit of Discovery Days, the festival commemorating the original bonanza.

For a unique view of the region's native cultures, let yourself be drawn into the web of legends and tales spun by performers at the Yukon International Storytelling Festival, in Whitehorse. Here, ancient Indian and Inuit narratives, as well as those of other cultures, are brought to life under the midnight sun, through mime, music, and words.

Winter newcomers to Whitehorse can cheer the start of the one-thousand-mile Yukon Quest dog-sled race, then stay for the annual Sourdough Rendezvous, a local games-and-music fest named for a staple of life in cold-weather climes.

In July, the Northwest Territories open a cultural treasure chest, with the back-to-back Great Northern Arts and Music festivals in the Mackenzie River Delta community of Inuvik. Pick up some fine Dene Indian leatherwork and Inuk soapstone carvings, or listen to traditional music like Gwich'in drumming and Delta fiddling.

And in coastal Paulatuk during the month of August, celebrate the return of the Arctic char, a fish as important to the region as cattle are to Texas. You'll find that when exploring this part of North America, any venture is a true adventure.

*Inuit sisters. (Photo: Douglas Walker, NWT Ecomomic Development and Tourism)*

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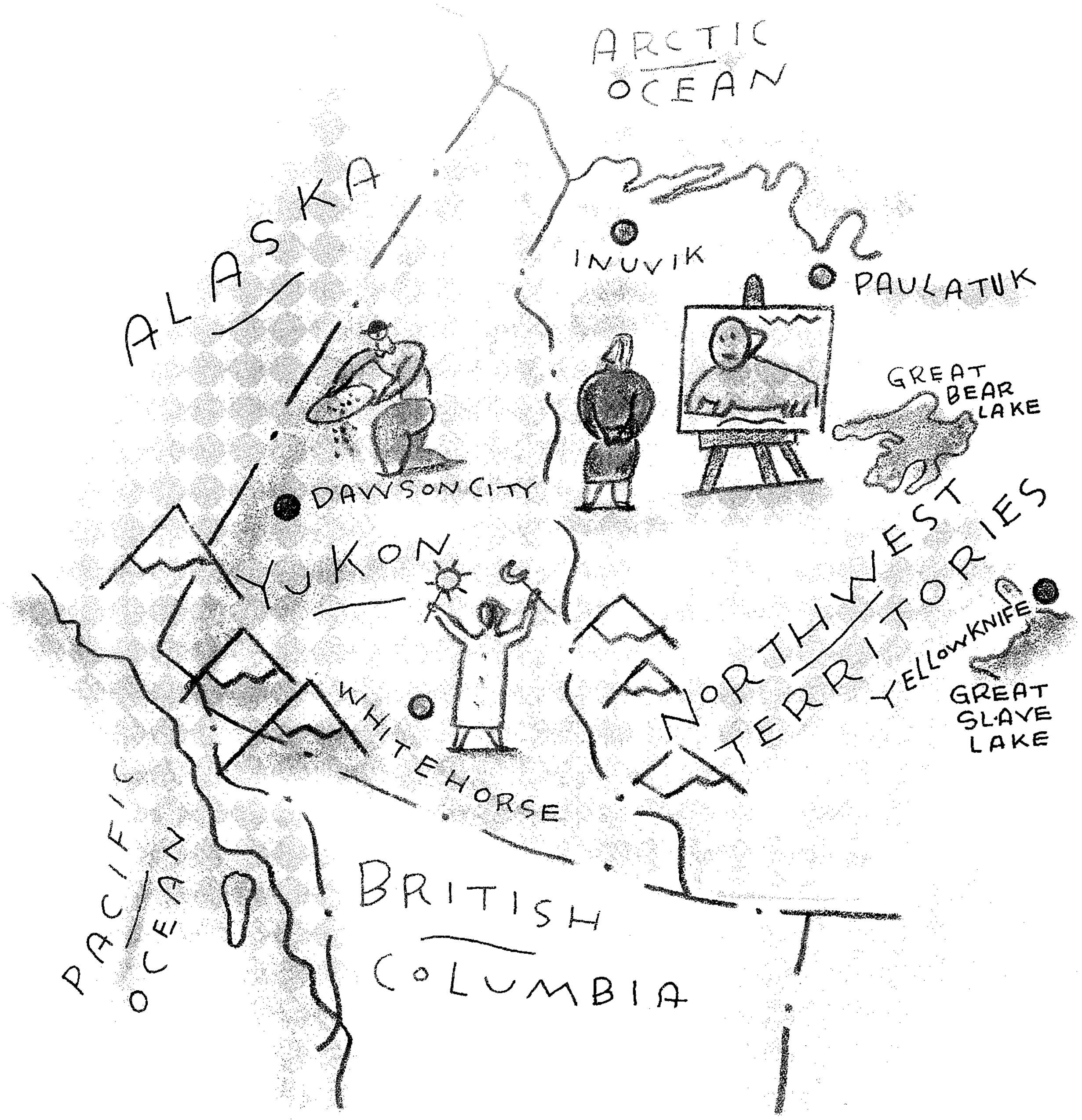

ARCTIC OCEAN
ALASKA
INUVIK
PAULATUK
GREAT BEAR LAKE
DAWSON CITY
YUKON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
YELLOWKNIFE
GREAT SLAVE LAKE
WHITEHORSE
PACIFIC OCEAN
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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# Canada

## As Much a World As A Country

To experience Canada is to take an intimate journey through the worlds of art, culture, and ethnic diversity. When you cross the border, prepare to be amazed every waking minute of the day or night. And there's never been a better time to visit. Come discover Canada, the ultimate cultural adventure.

For more information on Canada's cultural attractions, just call the destination you'd like to visit:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alberta* | *1-800-661-8888* |
| *British Columbia* | *1-800-663-6000* |
| *Manitoba* | *1-800-665-0040* |
| *New Brunswick* | *1-800-561-0123* |
| *Newfoundland and Labrador* | *1-800-563-6353* |
| *Northwest Territories* | *1-800-661-0788* |
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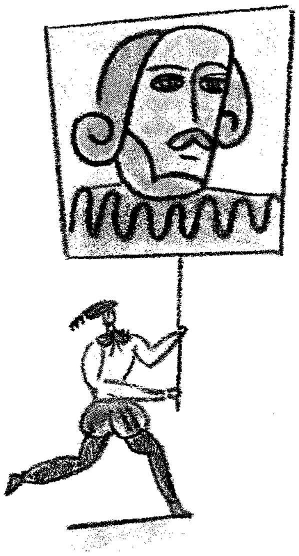
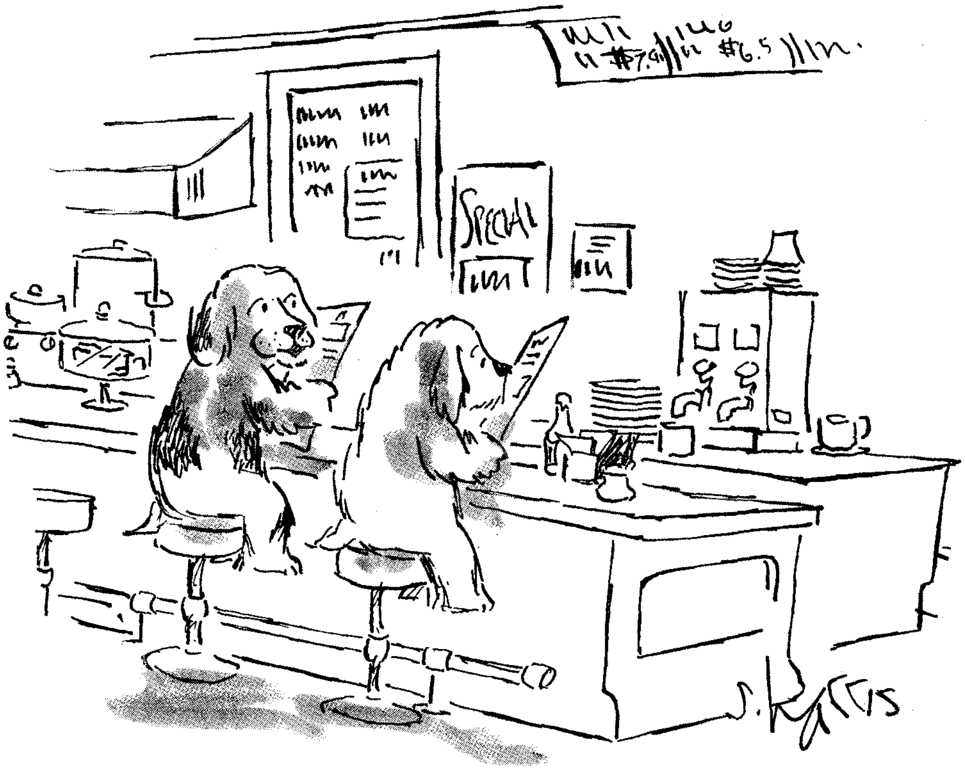


Canada

The World Next Door

talked to Disney, Time Warner, I.T.T., and, of course, Ted Turner, among others, about a sale or an alliance. A year ago, he asked the investment-banking firm Allen & Company to put a value on NBC and, in the words of a banker there, "to find a buyer." As late as last summer, according to four men who were privy to the discussions, Welch was prepared to sell a majority interest in NBC for the right price. He came particularly close to selling it to the Walt Disney Company. In those discussions, a Disney executive says, Welch said that the total value of NBC was more than six billion dollars.

What turned Welch from seller to buyer? At least five factors were involved in his change of heart, which came about during the summer of 1994. First, he was pleased with Bob Wright's team at NBC. The Wright who had always been a favorite of Welch's—witty, irreverent, at ease with himself—was not the uptight Wright who was first seen by many at NBC. As time passed, Wright relaxed. When CNBC's president, Roger Ailes, who had been a campaign media adviser for Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush, appeared on Don Imus's radio show and made cracks about Hillary Clinton, "the White House went batshit and tried to get me fired," Ailes recalls. "But Bob had already called me and said the show was funny." Ailes says, with a wink, that after the White House phoned, Wright called "to reprimand me." Not so long ago, Wright might have panicked and overreacted to the White House's fury. Partly because of incidents like this, Wright now commands the loyalty of his lieutenants. He recruited many of them by following a pattern: hire executives who have been producers. Besides hiring Lack, in 1989 he recruited Ebersol, a former producer of sports at ABC and of NBC's "Saturday Night Live," to run NBC Sports, and in 1993 he hired Don Ohlmeyer, a former network sports producer who ran his own production company in Hollywood, to run the entertainment division, and Ailes, who once produced "The Mike Douglas Show," to run CNBC and the America's Talking channel. In addition, Wright hired Neil Braun from Viacom in May of 1994, and Braun, who had been president of Viacom Entertainment, restructured NBC's business relationship with its more than two hundred affiliated stations.



*"The leftovers sound good."*

• •

By the fall of 1994, NBC Entertainment, which had such popular shows as "Seinfeld," "ER," and "Frasier," was challenging ABC for the ratings lead; it was broadcasting three profitable magazine hours, and the News Division was more profitable than it had ever been, earning fifty million dollars in 1994, according to a well-informed NBC official. In addition, for the first time ever one network had four major strongholds of sports coverage: National Football Conference games, the National Basketball Association games, major-league baseball (in theory, at least), and the 1996 Summer Olympics. CNBC was expected to earn thirty million dollars in 1994, and Roger Ailes believed that its revenues, combined with those of America's Talking, could rise an average of some forty per cent in each of the next five years. Neil Braun had negotiated pacts of between seven and ten years with NBC stations that reached at least three-quarters of the country, thereby securing NBC's domestic distribution system. And Thomas Rogers, who had joined the network in 1987, soon after Wright did, had worked out deals to assure overseas distribution of NBC's programming.

The improved economics of all the networks was a second factor that impressed Welch. Although Wright has consistently said that the network business is a mature, low-growth business, and has not altered this view over eight years, the networks' advertising sales rose about eight to ten per cent in 1994. The growth in advertising revenue reflected a sense within the advertising community that advertisers should again focus on mass-market advertising. The conviction grew that only the networks could potentially reach a hundred per cent of all Americans watching TV and thereby plant the name of a new product in the minds of a national audience. The champions of five hundred channel choices, or of a digitalized network that would allow viewers to interact with their TVs or computers and to watch whatever they wanted, assumed that most viewers had the time and the energy to program their leisure television time. But what if viewers just wanted to be passively entertained, just wanted to collapse in front of their TV sets and let an established brand name—NBC, say—do the scheduling? The movie business, like the networks, hasn't been a vibrant growth business over the past decade. In recent years, Hollywood made more money from video sales

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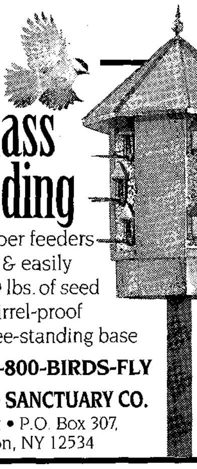

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than it did from domestic theatres, just as cable's profits have come to eclipse those of the networks. But a network, Neil Braun says, "is a medium where value is created, just as movie theatres create value." He explains, "The more successful a movie is in a theatre, the more successful it will be in a video store. You can't make an 'ER' in any other business. You can't get enough people to sample your product." Robert Iger, the president and chief operating officer of Cap Cities/ABC, says, "What's been wrong when analysts say that a network is not a growth business is that they are analyzing the traditional direction of a network. Networks should be analyzed as a spawning ground for new businesses or product."

The economics of the networks also got a boost from the federal government in the early nineties. Having decided that the networks were no longer monopolies, the government moved to allow them to serve as producers of more of their programs, and to sell these as reruns to local stations and abroad, thus opening a new revenue source. Of course, the new flexibility could invite some old monopolistic abuses. An investment banker who is bullish on networks predicts, perhaps hyperbolically, "These guys are going to lock out the studios. That's what they'd like to do. They're going to air their own product as much as they can."

A third factor in Welch's change of heart was Rupert Murdoch. The C.E.O.s of the three older networks had struggled for years to reduce the license fees they paid for sporting events and the cash compensation they paid to their stations for network affiliation. But Murdoch, beginning in late 1993, discarded the rule book. To get the National Football League's National Conference games for Fox, he was willing to lose money, and made an extravagant bid. The other networks complained that he would make sports prices far more costly and would lose a bundle in the process, and that is what happened. Only later did they realize that Murdoch kept his books a different way—that he had a broader strategy in mind. He was building assets. He was elevating the Fox brand name and the Fox platform. And he was making it more attractive for strong stations to switch and affiliate with Fox. Six months later, when he struck a deal with Ronald Perelman's New World and its twelve stations, Murdoch overnight snatched eight affiliates from CBS and one from NBC, triggering a mad scramble among all four networks to steal one another's stations. To date, NBC has lost four affiliates.

Welch and Wright were enraged. They had envisioned lower costs, and instead sports and station compensation were escalating. The stage was set for battle. Murdoch's moves, Lack and others say, helped to provoke Wright and Welch. So when NBC went to Welch last fall with a proposal to petition the Federal Communications Commission to rule that the Australian-based News Corporation had violated a rule that no more than one-fourth of a broadcast station may be owned by a foreign corporation, and warned Welch that in response Murdoch might attack G.E., Welch gave the proposal his approval. NBC was claiming the moral high ground. At an NBC management retreat in January, Wright raised the prospect of battling Murdoch in Asia. "We'll be going head-to-head with a number of Rupert Murdoch's programs," he declared.

A fourth factor in Welch's thinking was that Wright had devised a workable growth strategy, which he had outlined during a planning session at G.E.'s Fairfield, Connecticut, headquarters in July of 1994. Neil Braun says, "One message that Jack has consistently given me since I came here is this: 'If you can demonstrate this is a growth business, great. If we decide to sell, it will be because NBC failed to show that it was a growth business.' " At the retreat, Wright and his team spoke of the network as just one of many businesses that NBC would be in. Domestically, the network would reap greater profits by owning shows and selling the reruns to local stations, by expanding its cable holdings, and by continuing to invest in interactive media. The key, Wright said, was to think of NBC as being in "the video business," and not just the broadcast business. The network platform would "create value" for each of NBC's holdings. And perhaps the greatest value would come from what Wright called the "metered business," or services like pay-per-view and premium channels. Today, this is a six-billion-dollar business, consisting most prominently of movies and special events that cable viewers pay to watch on a onetime basis. If NBC could meter everything, so that viewers paid for what they watched on cable television, then you'd have hit a home run, Wright said.

But the true home run, Wright and his team told Welch, would come overseas. Already, NBC Super Channel in Europe and the Middle East could potentially reach sixty million viewers. NBC owned smaller broadcast and cable and satellite distribution systems in Asia, Central America, and South America, all featuring NBC programming. Ebersol said that if NBC and Turner were linked they could compete with ABC and its ESPN. Lack said that in the new year NBC News would reach three times as many viewers overseas as CNN, and, with its various foreign partners, had as a goal becoming the preëminent world-news network. Ailes said that CNBC would be the world's first live global business-news network.

Pride was no doubt the fifth factor that entered into Welch's calculus. He had always had a golden touch at G.E., but when NBC began to slip, several years after he and Wright arrived, critics spoke of a cultural gap. They said that Welch understood "hard" businesses, with tangible assets, like machines and light bulbs, but not "soft" businesses, like entertainment and news, where motivation and creativity mattered more. This charge surfaced again after G.E. acquired the Wall Street firm Kidder, Peabody & Company, in 1986, and then allowed a dizzying merry-go-round of managers to come and go. Soon G.E. was embarrassed both by its mounting losses and by the charges of employee fraud and lax management that were headlined on the front pages of newspapers. Jack Welch may have too much pride to surrender NBC now, particularly after he admitted defeat by selling Kidder late last year. NBC provides a platform not only for its products but also for its executives. Everyone has an opinion about what they do. Presidents and senators court them for more than campaign contributions. NBC lifts them off the business pages. "You don't get any publicity for making light bulbs," a retired network official observes.

WELCH insists that he and Wright have always been searching for an alliance to help build the business, even during the talks with Paramount's Martin Davis. "We were never interested in an outright sale of NBC," Welch says. "For example, all our discussions with Marty Davis involved our remaining as an equity player. Subsequent to our discussions with Davis, there have been several developments that convinced us we wanted to have the controlling interest in any strategic alliance." Welch's timetable is disputed by more than a few NBC insiders. Even in the summer of 1994, they say, Welch was prepared to sell majority ownership of NBC to Disney. Insiders date Welch's turnaround and search for a junior strategic partner to a later point that summer, when discussions were held with Time Warner about a television alliance in which G.E. would retain majority ownership of NBC. Several advisers say that this was the first time Welch had firmly stated the view that G.E. should retain majority control of NBC. When the Time Warner negotiations broke off, the yearlong conversations with Ted Turner heated up, only to collapse, in September, when Turner couldn't get a major shareholder—Time Warner, which owns about twenty per cent of his company—to go along.

Despite the impediment, discussions with Turner continued. Wright and Turner got excited about the possible synergies, agreeing, for example, that they might save two hundred million dollars by combining CNN and NBC News—though the figure, Andrew Lack says, is "at most a hundred million" and probably closer to seventy million.

But Turner and Wright were deadlocked over who would control the merged company. So on January 13th of this year, Welch and Wright got on a G.E. jet and flew to Atlanta, and the three men met alone in a suite at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. Several of Welch's advisers were stumped by the purpose of the meeting. If each side had insisted that it would not cede control, why make the visit? "I'm puzzled why Welch keeps going through these exercises with NBC," an investment banker who knows him well says. "It doesn't take three, four months to figure out. Welch goes through the exercise and decides he wants control. It demoralizes NBC." The reason for the summit meeting, Wright says, was that "Ted didn't believe we wouldn't sell." Welch's mission was to persuade him to change one group of owners, Time Warner and Tele-Communications, Inc., for another, G.E.

A potential Turner-NBC merger is still a distant possibility, strategists on both sides say. Relations remain ami-

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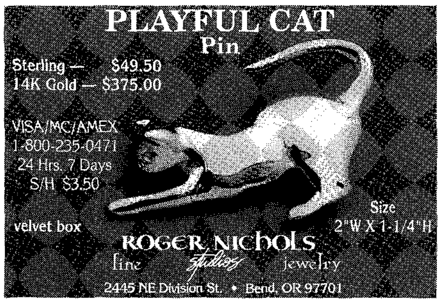
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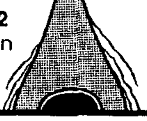
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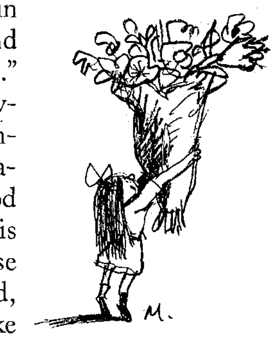
cable. Meanwhile, Wright says, NBC will continue to search for strategic partners but will build its own global network with or without a major partner. “Ours is a world-branding-franchise effort,” says Thomas Rogers, who is president of NBC’s cable and business development, borrowing the lingo of a Procter & Gamble product manager. “We are creating branded franchises in cable and over the air and overseas and in computers.” Welch has become a believer. At an annual G.E. management retreat in Boca Raton in January, Welch stood before five hundred of his managers, including those from NBC, and declared, “NBC is not for sale. We like NBC. The board of directors likes NBC. It is one of our great growth opportunities. . . . We are looking to find strategic relationships that can expand our opportunity.”



Turner has now switched his attention to Laurence Tisch and CBS, people close to both Turner and Tisch say. Turner and John Malone’s T.C.I. are feverishly working to buy out Time Warner’s minority stake in his company, thus clearing the way for him to buy a network. Turner has confided to an associate that in the next week or so he hopes to wrap up a deal with Tisch to acquire CBS. The pressures on Tisch to do a deal mount. He is seventy-two. While ABC and NBC have built or acquired non-network assets, Tisch has been selling off his assets since 1985. He has refused to expand. He keeps badgering his executives for deeper budget cuts. Recently, two exasperated CBS executives say, he proposed to substitute paid advertising for heretofore sacrosanct public-service announcements. Moreover, this year CBS may slip from first place to third in the nightly ratings, and has now lost Howard Stringer, its president, who kept the vehicle moving even as Tisch stripped it of the hubcaps and the seat covers. Stringer and Michael Ovitz together negotiated the deal to bring Letterman to CBS—a deal that earned more money for CBS last year than the network’s entire prime-time entertainment schedule. “I’m leaving somewhat serendipitously, because in the middle of the Christmas period Michael Ovitz brought an idea to me that made me think I could duplicate the great adventure I had when I first came to America and entered broadcasting,” the Welsh-born Stringer said. “It was an opportunity for a second challenging career. I couldn’t imagine that another opportunity like this would come along.”

With Tisch out trying to sell CBS, other executives are dispirited, aware that when Tisch goes they may be out of a job. To comfort nervous executives, Tisch announced last week that he would replace Stringer with his respected deputy, Peter Lund, the executive vice-president. Like Stringer, who tired of the onslaught, Lund may be under pressure from the relentless Tisch to cut, cut, cut. And any cuts will undoubtedly produce more black-eye headlines. As the asset diminishes and the stock price declines, Tisch is under more pressure to sell. The race at CBS may be whether Tisch can get his price—about eighty dollars a share—before the CBS stock drops.

Cap Cities/ABC flirted with a sale to Disney a few years ago. “Eisner could have bought us, but he balked at the price,” an important Cap Cities/ABC executive says. “Today, we’re more likely to be a buyer than a seller. We would be too expensive to buy.” With a market capitalization of thirteen billion dollars, analysts usually say, the company would bring as much as eighteen billion dollars if it were sold. Cap Cities/ABC, like both Murdoch and NBC, has a global programming strategy, but ABC has concentrated more on software than on distribution and is more willing to serve as a minority partner with foreign media companies.

ARE the networks really a good business, as Jack Welch says he now believes? And is Welch really a buyer and not a seller? While the strengths of a network have been mentioned, the potential disadvantages are many. It is a business that relies on a single source of revenue—advertising. And, while network viewing has stopped declining, and has been on a plateau of sixty per cent of audience share for the past couple of years, few network executives honestly believe that this pause is anything more than temporary. As viewers get more choices, the networks’ audience share will inevitably drop. How far it will drop no one can know.

It is true that government has opened a second lucrative revenue source for the networks, by allowing them to produce more of their own shows and to sell the shows in the syndication marketplace. However, there are perils here as well. “The commonly accepted view that ‘content is king’ applies only if distribution is available,” Tom Wolzien and John Penney, of Sanford C. Bernstein & Company, the Wall Street firm, have written. “The distribution potential for off-network reruns appears to be drying up.” With three new networks—Fox, Paramount, and Warner Bros.—joining NBC, ABC, and CBS, and with more independent stations now affiliated with one or another of these six networks, there has been a “contraction in the number of stations that can air reruns in the most profitable 7-11 P.M. time slot.” Wolzien and Penney estimate that in four years, only fourteen of the total of eleven hundred and fifty-four TV stations will not have a network affiliation. Networks will no doubt continue to increase their revenues through sales to cable outlets, which pay little, and to new overseas outlets, but half-hour comedies, which are the financial backbone of the lucrative rerun business, tend not to travel well. A third peril is the blurring of the line between a network and a studio. What if Ted Turner got CBS and took a show that he owned—“Seinfeld,” say—away from NBC? What if Viacom pulled “Melrose Place” from Fox and put it on the Paramount network? Still another danger is related to government deregulation. What if the company that owns the wire into the house is free to scramble channels—to move, say, Channel 4 to Channel 64? Will viewer habits be broken if viewers are required to flip around the dial to find a network? And what if governments abroad impose trade sanctions to keep out American cultural imperialists?

The answers to these questions are as yet unknowable. So is the answer to the question of whether Jack Welch would really sell NBC. What if he doesn’t find a partner to help make NBC grow quickly? What if NBC slips again, as it did four years ago, when Welch first decided to sell? Not to be forgotten, of course, is the fact that in last October’s *Forbes* Welch said that G.E. would not sell Kidder Peabody, and a few weeks later the brokerage firm was sold to Paine Webber. Jack Welch is not Warren Buffet, who prides himself on making what he calls "permanent" investments in companies like Cap Cities/ABC and the Washington Post Company.

Welch and Bob Wright are extraordinarily nimble. For example, despite their belligerent posture toward Murdoch, on February 17th the two worldwide rivals reached a truce that sounded very much like an old-fashioned political deal. In exchange for NBC's agreeing to suspend its campaign to deny Murdoch his station licenses, Murdoch agreed to distribute the programming of two NBC cable channels on his Star satellite system in Asia. The impetus for the truce, Wright says, was threefold. First, NBC had succeeded in putting its claims before Congress and the F.C.C., he says, and it was clear that a ruling on foreign ownership would be made within the year. "It was also apparent that we had done significant damage to Fox in Washington," he adds. Second, with the failed launch in January of NBC's alternate satellite distributor in Asia—Apstar-2—NBC now needed Murdoch's Star satellite to deliver the NBC brand name. And, finally, because it became so personal between the companies, Wright says, "there was no way we were going to have a business relationship with them with this thing pending."

Of course, this realpolitik did not coincide with NBC's high moral tone earlier in the battle. What would Wright say to someone who thought NBC was as cynical as it once accused Murdoch of being? "This has always been about business," Wright responds. NBC is not in the business of prosecuting the public trust, or advancing a philosophical policy it believes in, he implies. It is in business to make money.

Like Wright, Welch is not sentimental, and that is one reason people don't entirely believe that he won't sell. Perhaps the best way for Welch to raise the price of NBC, a Disney executive says, is to insist that it's not for sale. "Maybe he's being a shrewd negotiator," this executive says. And Roger Ailes observes that, if the offer were big enough, Welch's fiduciary responsibility to shareholders would require a sale. "It's like marriage vows," Ailes says. "You mean them. You do your damnedest to uphold them, but . . ." ♦

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## ANNALS OF DOMESTIC LIFE

# THE NANNY TRACK

*Much has been made of the paradox that forces the affluent working mother to entrust the care of her children to another woman. But the nanny's dilemma is no easier, as the author learns from her own child-care helper.*

### BY SUSAN CHEEVER

DOMINIQUE came to New York eight years ago, but she says it would take a lifetime to figure out New Yorkers. We teach our kids that money can't buy love, and then we go right ahead and buy it for them—hiring strangers to love them, because we have more important things to do. "You are workaholics, that's for sure," she tells me, in the lilting island accent she uses for unpleasant truths. "It's work, work, work with you, and money, money, money. You analyze every little stupid thing, and then you run off to some therapist to get the answers." She shakes her head and laughs, fiddling with a red plastic Thunderzord my five-year-old son has left on the table. Strangest of all, she says, we super-smart New Yorkers are afraid of our children—afraid to say no, afraid to deny them anything that other kids have. "It's hard for the nannies to adjust to our New York way," says Eileen Stein, of Town & Country, an agency that has placed Dominique in several jobs. "Here children are the boss. The children run the home. The parents let the children do whatever they want."

If there's a good woman behind every great man, behind every great *woman* there's a good nanny. The restructuring of the American family has created a huge demand for child care. According to a 1992 Department of Consumer Affairs report that calls the nanny-placement industry a "free-for-all," there are almost four hundred thousand children under thirteen in New York City whose parents both work, and fewer than a hundred thousand places for them in after-school and day-care programs. The demand for child care at home has been met by an unregulated patchwork of agencies, a few experienced nannies, and thousands of immigrant women looking for jobs that require no training, no degrees, and, often, no papers. "It's hard to make a living back home," says Dominique, who came from Trinidad on a tourist visa when she was twenty, leaving behind a job that paid the equivalent of a hundred and thirty dollars a week. "Working here and sending money home is the only way I can take care of my family."

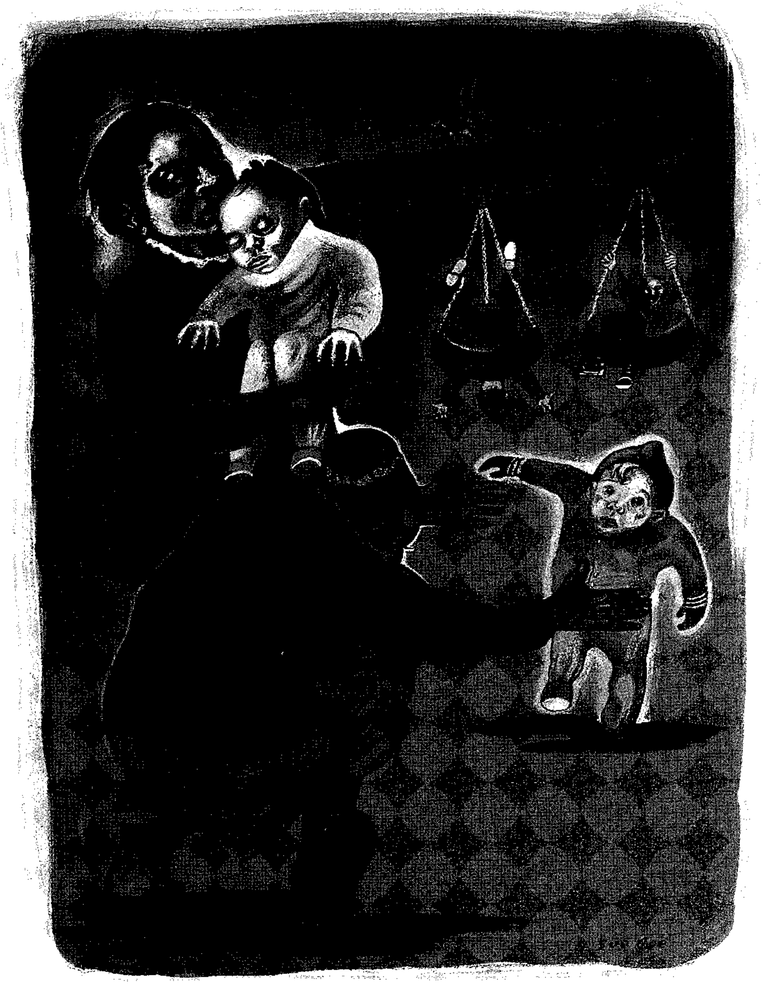
This collision of necessity and need is a disaster for working mothers, who have to find reliable child care in an unreliable market, and for the nannies who work for them with no protection or guarantees. Many New York nannies are from the Caribbean—Trinidad, Jamaica, other islands of the West Indies—but there are thousands of Philippine, Irish, and South and Central American nannies, too. (A nanny is a full-time worker who lives in or out and is paid between two hundred and fifty dollars and six hundred dollars a week. A baby nurse lives in for twenty-four hours a day during the first weeks of an infant's life and gets a hundred dollars a day or more.) Usually, nannies arrive with visas that are valid for a few months. But finding a good legal nanny is so difficult that many families are willing to break the law. And agencies sometimes lie about the legal status of the nannies they place.

Dominique is lucky; she got her green card through one of the first families she worked for. But in eight years she has had eight jobs—some good, some bad, some ugly. These days, she lives in Brooklyn—like most nannies, she can't afford Manhattan rents—and works for a professional couple who live with their two children in a big postwar building on East Eighty-sixth Street. She has worked in Greenwich Village (she loves it), on the Upper West Side (she hates it), and in the suburbs (trapped!). From 1992 to 1994, she worked for me, taking care of my two children. I had always thought of myself as the perfect employer; when I interviewed Dominique for this article—in which I have changed some names and identifying details—she gently set me straight.

DOMINIQUE'S morning begins in the dark, in the heart of Brooklyn. She switches on CD 101.9 radio and Channel 5 TV ("Good Day New York"), and slides a worn Bible out from under her pillow. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow," she reads. "They toil not, neither do they spin." It's 6:08 A.M., and the temperature is thirty-six degrees. There are tieups on the George Washington Bridge and ten-minute delays on the Lexington Avenue line. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow," she reads. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Her apartment, a studio that costs five hundred and four dollars a month, is sparsely furnished with a glass-topped dining-room table and chairs from Workbench, and a bed; Dominique would rather have no furniture than the tacky stuff some of her friends crowd into their apartments. Next to the stereo system are neat piles of Toni Braxton and Luther Vandross tapes and the eight-pound dumbbells that Dominique uses three or four times a week—she does half an hour of lifting and twenty minutes of aerobics. Out the window, beyond the fire escape, she can see the Sears sign over near Flatbush Avenue and the outline of Canarsie out toward Jamaica Bay.

It's getting light as Dominique walks down Cortelyou Road—past the shabby Cortelyou Medical Clinic at the corner, past the shuttered liquor store and check-cashing place, past a few yards where the grass and trees are fighting a losing battle. The narrow platform of the Cortelyou Road station is above grade, and she can see the houses on the steep embankment across the tracks. Colored lights flash in their windows, though Christmas has been over for weeks. The D train pulls in, already crowded. At the Atlantic Avenue station, Dominique hurries through a maze of tunnels and up a flight of stairs to catch the No. 5.

Dominique is a tall woman with athletic grace, and she wears her hair in tight braids, which her friend Rose does for her every month. Today, she has on pressed jeans and a blue shirt with a loose brown jacket and comfortable low boots. She still shops mostly in Greenwich Village, although she hasn't worked there in years. Sometimes on Saturday afternoons, she meets Rose or her friend Phyllis, and they hit French Connection and the shoe stores on Eighth Street. Her employers, Suzanne and Henry, often ask her to work on weekends, actually, but when they don't Dominique's first priority is to catch up on her sleep. Her job with the children exhausts her, and by Friday she can't wait to get home and crash. She usually wakes up at eleven on Saturday morning, does her laundry, and cleans her apartment. Then she walks out to Flatbush Avenue to shop for the Trinidadian treats—curry, other spices, and vegetables like callaloo leaves and dasheen and eddoes—that she uses to cook. Dominique originally came to Flatbush Avenue because of friends from home, and she still appreciates Brooklyn's huge population of West Indians. "You don't see any doormen in my neighborhood, and you don't see a lot of women in fur coats," she says. "I feel safe here, because these are my people." Sometimes she takes the subway to a video store in Park Slope and visits Rose on her way home. Usually she rents a comedy—something with Eddie Murphy or Pauly Shore. "When I'm alone, I like to laugh," she says. "I'm not going to rent a love story and watch it by myself."



*If there's a good woman behind every great man, behind every great woman there's a good nanny.*

SUE COE

Today, she's hoping to pick up a dress that she left on hold at Canadians on Eighty-sixth Street, a fitted black sheath with a flared skirt and a sateen heart appliqué. Dominique usually wears pants or long skirts—this will be the first short dress she has bought in a long time. "I'll find something to do in it," she says. "Summer's coming up." When it's warm, Dominique's weekend social life extends into Manhattan, where she and other Trini men and women hang out at Caribe, in the Village, or at Houlihan's near Times Square.

On the train, she stakes out a small space near a pole, but a woman with red hair and flowery perfume is pushed against her, crushing her against an older man with a briefcase. The corner of the briefcase digs into her leg. Every time the woman behind her shifts, waves of perfume fill the stuffy underground air. A man in a black jacket leers at her from across the car, and Dominique recognizes him as a man who fondles women in crowded subway cars. She and her friends laugh about him and call him "the pervert." The loudspeaker squawks unintelligible information.

Out on Eighty-sixth Street, an icy wind is blowing off the East River. Dominique thinks of New York as home, but she'll never get used to how cold it is here and the way night falls at 4 P.M. in the winter. She stops to buy an orange and a Snapple. The people she works for eat out, and their children live on sweet cereal, bread, boxed fruit juice, and peanut butter and jelly that are premixed in the jar. Dominique nurses her Snapple (guava- or pink-grapefruit-flavored) all day, eats the orange when she's hungry, and tries to make herself a proper dinner when she gets home. On a good night, she makes curried chicken and steams some broccoli. On a bad night, she stops at Burger King for a shake. Now, shouldering her way through the crowds, she passes the health-food store where the kids eat vegetarian pizza. She avoids looking in the windows of a new, expensive shoe store; she loves to buy shoes.

At York Avenue, she turns away from her destination and goes around the corner of Eighty-seventh Street to St. Joseph's Church. Inside, she crosses herself with holy water, lights a candle, and kneels near the back, where stained-glass windows throw splashes of color on the whitewashed walls. It's almost eight o'clock. The people she works for are just getting out of bed. But as she kneels Dominique daydreams for a minute, remembering home: the big white-and-blue house in Valencia where she lived after her mother married the small town's unofficial mayor, Big Daddy Will Diamond. The candle is for her mother. She also prays for her own eight-year-old daughter, Crystal, who lives in Valencia with Dominique's sister. Dominique hasn't seen her daughter in three years. As she prays, she feels a familiar, sharp sadness about Crystal. Then she reminds herself that the money she is making will buy her daughter an education, so that she can get a stable job with good wages—*she* won't end up in New York taking care of other people's children.

When Dominique was growing up,

she always knew she wasn't going to be a typical Trini girl—hanging out in Valencia, with its dead-end jobs, and girls who had children when *they* were still children. She was going a lot farther than Sangre Grande, the nearest big town, which everyone called Sandy Grandy. Dominique had an aunt who lived in London, but she favored New York. She saw "Saturday Night Fever" four times. Every Sunday night she watched "Fame," the TV show starring the lucky kids at the New York School of Performing Arts, who stopped traffic with their dancing. Dominique loved to dance. She still does, turning up the volume and pulling down the shades and prancing alone around her little room. But now she knows that nothing stops New York traffic. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow . . ." she remembers as she crosses Eighty-sixth Street to work. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

DOMINIQUE smiles at the doorman and lets herself into the apartment. Suzanne is desperately jiggling the crying baby on one hip while she tries to make a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. The dog is yapping. Emily, the five-year-old, is giggling and eating Froot Loops at the kitchen table. There's a puddle of milk on the floor. Suzanne's nightgown is stained with applesauce and instant coffee. Dominique says good morning; in response, Suzanne groans and hands her the baby. Dominique can hear the shower: Henry is getting ready for work.

It's a modern apartment, with lots of light, but it's crowded with furniture and unopened mover's boxes are piled in one corner. The kitchen counters are overflowing with dishes, and the cabinets are filled with paper plates and appliances that are still in bubble wrap. When Dominique took this job, six months ago, Suzanne explained that they had just moved in. Later, Dominique found out that they had "just moved in" in 1992; she has often heard Henry boast that they got the apartment for a great price in a buyer's market.

The baby screeches with delight and then grunts with satisfaction, wiggling his whole body in Dominique's arms. Dominique kisses him on the top of his downy head and silently tells him to chill. She doesn't want Suzanne to be jealous. She doesn't like dealing with parents' jealousy of the bonds that she forms with their children. "They want us to be mother and father to these children," she says. "They're the ones who brought the kids into the world, but then they don't have time to raise them. So the kids get attached to you, because you're the one who's always there. Then the parents get angry."

*"What do you think, Al—shall I use the tax cut for a CD-ROM drive or an Uzi?"*

This is part of what Dominique and her friends call the attachment factor—one of the most intransigent problems of being a New York nanny. "The kids see you all the time, and they assume you are going to be part of their life," says Sally, an Irish nanny, who is Dominique's closest friend in the building. Sally has had three jobs in five years. Two years ago, she applied for a position with a rich, prominent New York family. When she was interviewed, she was told she would wear a uniform, would have to be available for travelling, and would never under any circumstances speak directly with the parents of the children she was caring for—the family had hired a liaison person for that. She took the job on East Eighty-sixth Street instead.

"When you leave, the children can be devastated—and it can break your heart, too," Sally says. Nannies rarely get notice. Then, there's the problem of the hours, which seem to get more flexible (i.e., longer) the longer you work for a family. There's the problem of being asked to do work—dog walking, ironing, serving at dinner parties—that was not part of the job description and was not included in the original salary. And if the job can sometimes be too flexible the salary is often inflexible: many employers count minutes and deduct dollars when a nanny is late. Sometimes nannies get farmed out to clean or babysit for their employers' friends, too. "When they act as if my services are their property—property they can lend out whenever they want—that really makes me feel bought," Sally says.

There is the problem of summers. Many families offer nannies a Hobson's choice: either go away with them and be trapped in some all-white resort (in nanny circles, the Hamptons is a synonym for Hell) or take token wages while they're gone. There is the problem of a family's dependence on their nanny. "Some weekends, they call me five or six times," Dominique says. "Basically, I'm on call around the clock. I feel like my life isn't mine even when I'm at home."

Many nannies wonder why their employers bothered to have children at all. "I see these women struggling between being the career person who gets self-esteem from her job and being the parent

## ST. MARK'S

Still like a child, isn't it?
Climbing up an iron staircase,
arguing with some Igor
over the broken lock,
letting my head hang into the sink,
rinsing my neck with cold water.

Like a wolf, wasn't it?
Or a dove that will never die.
Reading Propertius, trampling
the highest stars,
forcing my hands together,
touching the row of snow-capped garbage cans.

Swaybacked, wasn't it?
Dragging my wet feet
from one park to the other.
"Softened by time's consummate plash,"
isn't it?
Tulip of the pink forest.
Red-and-yellow swollen rainwashed tulip.

—GERALD STERN

who really loves her children," Sally says. "But you shouldn't have kids if you're not ready to make adjustments. Sometimes it blows me away when I'll come in to work and there will be no milk and no cereal and no money for groceries. Two people without kids who eat out don't have to have groceries, but with kids you need to have something for them to eat."

Worst of all, being a nanny is a job with negative stability. When children go to school—and in New York they sometimes go to school at age two—the job begins to evaporate. Many New York children are in school from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. by the time they are five. Nannies have to get along with their employers in a relationship that is in certain respects more intimate than a marriage. Sometimes they are treated like servants; sometimes they are treated like best friends. They are required to be completely reliable and completely discreet. They are asked to ignore drug problems. They must see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil—like the nanny in Jamaica Kincaid's novel "Lucy," who walks in on her employer licking the neck of his wife's best friend. (The intensity of the connection between nannies, mothers, and children has attracted storytellers from Homer—who made Odysseus' nurse the only woman who could identify him—to Charlotte Brontë, who made her most sympathetic heroine, Jane Eyre, a governess. The nanny canon also includes the evil Miss Jessel from Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw," the precursor of dozens of malignant child-care professionals, all acting out a mother's worst fears—right up to "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle.")

Nannies want to be treated as professionals. Dominique's friend Maria took a nanny-awareness class in Brooklyn last year. "The main thing they told us was to be businesslike," she says. "Businesslike, businesslike! But it's hard to be businesslike when you're going into someone's house and taking care of their children." I heard one or two horror stories from the nannies I spoke to: an employer who would give a reference only in exchange for sex; a man who left pornographic pictures around and watched the nanny's reactions; a woman who checked the garbage to see what her children had eaten; another woman who came home at 2 A.M. and broke all the windows in her apartment with a heavy copper saucepan. But the real horrors are more subtle—employers who tell their nannies what to wear, employers who depend on them so much that the nannies go to work even when they're sick. Sally says, "I lie there in bed when I'm sick and I think, Did anyone get Laurie's lunch? Do they know that it's library day? Do they know that she has a play date with Joan after school? I might as well go to work." And when a nanny leaves, it can be as devastating for the parents as it is for the children.

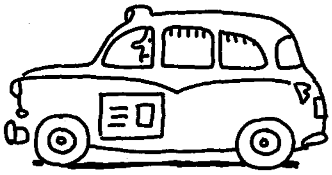
"We could close down the city," says Myrtle Johnson, a child-care veteran who works as a short-term baby nurse because she believes that nannies always end up getting treated badly. "If we didn't go to work, the mothers would go crazy, and they'd drive the husbands crazy, and no one could work. If there's a garbage strike, the trash just lies there. If there's a postal strike, the mail doesn't get delivered. But if the nannies were to strike it would be different. You can't just leave a baby around until there's someone ready to take care of it."

In twenty-five years as a baby nurse, Myrtle has travelled with families to Calgary (for the Olympics) and London (where she stayed at Claridge's), and has saved enough to buy a big brick house on Grant Avenue in the Bronx. In her kitchen there's a double Garland stove—the best. Upstairs, she has installed a pink-and-gold bathroom with a wicker basket of fluffy towels; it could fit right in on Park Avenue. But success hasn't changed her attitude. "The nannies are there for the duration," she says. "The employers get to think they own them, and it's just like anything else. You have a boyfriend, you do anything to keep him, you give him cocktails and lobsters. Then, when he marries you, it's no more cocktails and no more lobsters."

IN the thirteen years I have been raising children in New York, I've employed three full-time nannies, supplemented by about a dozen babysitters. Dominique was the third nanny. The first, Juana, had a family. She and her husband and their four-year-old son lived in a two-family house in Jackson Heights along with her mother and her sister and brother-in-law. While she was working for me, her sister got a job in a nearby building, with a couple who had made a lot of money on Wall Street. The husband travelled a lot, and the wife kept two cosmetics jars filled with a white powder, which she snorted through a little silver straw.

When Juana had been looking after my daughter for two years, I began sponsoring her for a green card. Juana and I were friends, I thought. I forgot our vast cultural differences. After all, I knew enough Spanish to talk to her in her own language; we almost never spoke English to one another. I forgot that money was the root of our friendship. But over the years there were signs that I might have taken more seriously. The first song Juana taught my daughter, a Spanish lyric about home, was a song filled with anger and longing. It always reminded me that if she had her choice she would be somewhere else. She spent hours on the phone with her family. When her son came to the house with her, he didn't like playing with my daughter and her friends; he sat wherever Juana was working and read Spider-Man comics. Juana took over my household so completely that I felt uncomfortable about dropping in unannounced during the day. Sometimes I made her uncomfortable, too. One day in the country when we were in the car together, we got stuck behind a rusted-out pickup going thirty miles an hour, driven by an ancient farmer. "He's just an old campesino," I said in Spanish to Juana as we swept by. Juana turned and looked straight at me as I accelerated. "*Mi padre es un viejo campesino*," she said quietly.

When Juana got her green card, she told me that she needed the summer off. My marriage was breaking up; I was on a book deadline. I said no. Then she told me she was sick. I called my own doctor, but he refused to see her. "I don't have any luck with these people," he said. I dismissed this as racist talk. I sent Juana to another doctor; she claimed she couldn't find his office. Juana then went to her own doctor and reported to me that she had heart problems, and that her doctor had said she needed the summer off. My husband said Juana was sick as in "sick of working for us."



I asked Juana to have her doctor call me. She quit abruptly, leaving a note and the keys with my doorman after work one Friday night. A few months later, I found out that she had taken the summer off and then returned to New York to work as a nanny for a friend of mine—a woman who had been my daughter's nursery-school teacher.

Wounded, I turned to a prestigious nanny agency. They sent me Cara, assuring me that she was in this country legally. She was, *very* legally: she had two separate Salvadoran passports, from two separate legal entries. Cara had left six children behind when she came to New York. When I asked her about this, she explained that there was no other way to support them. I got the feeling that she thought her choices were none of my business. She had to choose between a decent life for her children and a mother for her children, she said, and she chose a decent life. What use was a mother who couldn't feed her family?

I didn't say anything to Cara, but I was shocked. The facts of Cara's life were beyond my imagination. Over the years she worked in New York, Cara sent enough money home for her children to buy a plantation and build a house with marble bathrooms and hallways, while Cara shared an apartment in Queens. Three of her children now have college degrees and good jobs, and the others are thriving, too, while their childhood playmates are sinking deeper into poverty.

Cara and I had some ups and downs, but we stuck it out, and she became more integral to my family than ever when I had a second child. She worked for me full time for six years and part time after she got a more stable job, teaching English.

Dominique holds the baby and finishes making Emily's lunch as Suzanne hastily gets dressed. She is late; she is always late. When she leaves, taking Emily to nursery school, Dominique is alone with the baby, who struggles to be put down on the floor. He is learning to crawl. Dominique clears a space for him and glares at the dog, who has curled up on the only available chair. Sitting on the floor next to the baby, she combs his sparse hair. She changes him and plays a tickling game that makes him giggle and squirm happily. Still cross-legged on the floor, she dresses him in a red-and-blue overall set—one of dozens in the bureau. The day stretches emptily in front of her, and she thinks about how, back home, the days were never long enough. When Crystal was born, Dominique's friends all came over to help. She worked, but she never had to hire anyone to take care of her daughter; her friends and family would have been offended at the idea. In Valencia, there's a saying: It takes a whole village to raise a child. That's how it was back home, where everyone gathered after work to play cricket or soccer. Dominique excelled at both. Valencia had fruit trees, tall palms, and neat rows of stucco houses with big porches for sitting out in the cool of the evening after dinner. Dominique's mother spoiled her.

But when Dominique was seventeen her mother's high blood pressure flared, and she died suddenly. She was forty-nine. Dominique's voice still breaks when she talks about her mother's death. She took up with a handsome detective from Sandy Grandy, and within a year she was pregnant. "I was looking for someone to replace my mom," she says. "I was looking for someone to love me." She was laid off from her job as a sanitation supervisor. "My life got very messed up," she says. That was when she decided to leave.

She came to New York and settled on Flatbush Avenue with two homegirls. They had been her friends in Valencia; now, because she was new, they were too good for her. Instead of enrolling at the School of Performing Arts, she registered with Staffmates, a placement agency for live-in nannies. First, she was sent to a job in New Jersey where the woman drove a Mercedes and treated Dominique like a slave. Next was a family on Long Island, with four boys and a big house to clean—at a hundred and sixty dollars a week. "By the time I had finished the laundry and picked up the kids and cooked the dinner, it was time to start the laundry again," Dominique says. One Monday morning, she quietly packed her bag and walked to the railroad station. She had learned what it was like to work for American mothers. "They need your help," Myrtle Johnson says, "but they just don't need your company."

Finally, she got a good job, with a family in Teaneck who had one daughter. They started sponsoring her, and she settled into a big room that they had had furnished for the nanny. On Sunday mornings, the father put on reggae music and made pancakes for the whole family—including Dominique. But after three years her frame of mind began to deteriorate. "I felt trapped," she says. The feeling was intensified when she got her green card and was attacked by the restlessness that nannies call "green carditis." Her misery peaked during a summer when the family spent a month in the Hamptons. "I needed my own space,"

"Frogs? Isn't that supposed to be some kind of warning?"

Dominique says. "I was dying slowly."

One hot day when the family was out, Dominique decided to cool off on an inflatable raft in the swimming pool. Like many West Indians, she grew up near water but never learned to swim. She floated into the pool's deep end, slipped off the raft, and came close to drowning before she was able to grab the side of the pool. This seemed like an omen. "I hate the Hamptons," she says now, almost five years later. "And I get hysterical at the way they call it 'the country' and 'the island.' Like Manhattan isn't an island? They go out there to get out of the city and then they sit in traffic jams. When they're there, they party all weekend, and when they're not out, their friends are over making a mess, and it's 'Oh, Dominique, would you mind taking care of their kids, too?' The next house is a hundred miles away. They don't have time for their kids when they're in the Hamptons."

Back in Brooklyn, she found a job in Park Slope, with a psychologist named Leslie, who taught at a local college. Leslie and her husband, a professor, had a two-year-old son. It was a wonderful job. The commute was only two subway stops; the apartment was close to Prospect Park; Leslie and her husband were generous and friendly and gone all day. But after a year the little boy started school, and the family began looking for part-time help. Dominique registered with another Manhattan agency, Town & Country.

Then, through her friend Rose, she got a job in Greenwich Village, with a lawyer and his wife and their daughter. They lived in an apartment off Fifth Avenue, and the wife spent most of her time at exercise class, with her nutritionist, out shopping, or having lunch with friends. Dominique and Rose hooked up with a group of nannies employed in the neighborhood, and while the ladies lunched on pumpkin ravioli and arugula their children ate pizza with the nannies in Washington Square Park.

One of the nannies' favorite topics was their employers. A nanny who was a regular in the park complained that when her employer left the house every day, she locked the bedroom door. Another nanny told the others how she had got her papers without the help of a sponsor. She had found a small-claims-court officer to marry her and make her legal for nineteen hundred dollars. They met a few times to coördinate their story, and then the court officer went with her on all the interviews required by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Dominique learned that these marriages were common; another nanny had paid an Upper East Side doorman five thousand dollars to marry her.

Dominique rented an apartment in Crown Heights with her friend Margaret, an accountant, and on weekends the two cruised Brooklyn in Margaret's BMW or drove into Manhattan to shop in the Village. Dominique started going out with a man she had noticed on the subway and then run into one night at the Carvel store on Flatbush. But the fact that she had another life seemed to irritate Patty, the woman she worked for. "I think she was very insecure because her friends were thin and rich," Dominique says. "She liked the way I looked at first, but then she changed. She turned. She started thinking the three hundred dollars a week was too much money." Slowly, what had been a good job became a nightmare.

"What makes it go wrong?" Dominique says. "Different things. It often happens when you get too friendly. You have to keep it business as business." If Dominique asked for a few hours off, there was always a problem. Patty began asking her to do more and more cleaning. She sometimes got back from the gym or shopping half an hour late—not quite late enough for Dominique to get paid for an extra hour—and she began leaving the bed unmade and her clothes where they fell. One morning, Patty abandoned her tights and underwear on the living-room floor, where she had peeled them off after a workout. Dominique left them there all day.

Rose, who worked for a friend of Patty's named Julia, was beginning to fray at the same time. One day, Rose wanted a few hours off, and Julia said she would think about it. Then Dominique overheard Julia telling Patty loudly over the phone, "There is no way that girl is going to get the afternoon off!" At the last minute, Julia sweetly told Rose that it was impossible. Rose told Dominique she didn't even care about the time off—she could understand that Julia might need her—but she hated the way Julia used one voice with her friends and then tried to sweet-talk her nanny. The locked bedroom door that their friend had complained about became a symbol of their employers' hypocrisy—hypocrisy that was sometimes hard to ignore.

One of the worst cases, in Dominique's circle, involved a woman who prided herself on paying her nanny only a hundred and seventy-five dollars for a forty-five-hour week. Every weekend, her husband secretly slipped the nanny a hundred and twenty-five dollars more. Sometimes they met in a nearby coffee shop; sometimes he left the money in a prearranged hiding place. The husband explained to the nanny that his wife didn't understand money and that they had to keep her real salary a secret, but the nanny saw how much he enjoyed the deception ("We're brilliant!" he crowed one day). She knew that if she complained she would lose the job. Myrtle Johnson puts it this way: "The nanny's under them. They are above the nanny. But then if the nanny decides to quit, they are like a fish out of water."

In the meantime, Dominique had learned a little more about life in New York. She had felt prejudice for the first time, in the fancy stores in SoHo ("They *didn't want to know about me!*") and in the fact that it was almost impossible for her to get a cab. She was continually surprised by the way New York kids manipulated their parents. The little girl she was caring for had resisted potty training, so her mother bribed her with presents. Dominique calculated that at approximately twenty dol-

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POSTSCRIPT

# FULBRIGHT'S LEGACY

J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT had a fervent commitment to internationalism. That commitment was rooted in the failures of the wave of isolationism that swept over this country after the First World War and found its highest—or lowest—expression in the Senate's rejection of American participation in the League of Nations. In the nineteen-twenties, on a Rhodes scholarship, the young Arkansan travelled around Europe observing firsthand the pathologies that would explode into renewed global war. In 1943, Representative Fulbright put the token of his career in place when he became the original sponsor of the resolution urging the establishment of the United Nations. During his thirty years as a senator, half of it as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee (which had originally killed the United States role in the League), Fulbright was a beacon of internationalism. The Fulbright scholarships, his most famous legacy, were only one of his efforts to forge indissoluble links between the United States and the world. It was natural for Fulbright, who had been the president of the University of Arkansas, to regard internationalism as a process of constant education.

Fulbright's great dissents were expressions of his disdain for the irrational. In 1954, he was the sole senator to vote against funding Senator Joseph McCarthy's witch-hunting committee, and he instigated the Senate's condemnation of McCarthy.

The relationship between Fulbright and Lyndon Johnson was a subplot in a Shakespearean tragedy. In the Senate they were close for decades. Majority Leader Johnson told Fulbright, "You are my Secretary of State"; Vice-President-elect Johnson recommended him as Secretary of State to John F. Kennedy. By 1964, Fulbright had begun to question the rigid dogmas of the Cold War, especially as it was being conducted in the Third World, in a series of lectures entitled "Old Myths and New Realities." The inability to shake loose from these myths, he warned, was dangerous because it could "reduce foreign policy to a fraudulent game of imagery and appearance." Even so, at virtually the same moment that Fulbright offered this caution, he sponsored the Tonkin Gulf resolution, which he believed would swiftly end the Vietnam War but which served instead as the sanction for its escalation.

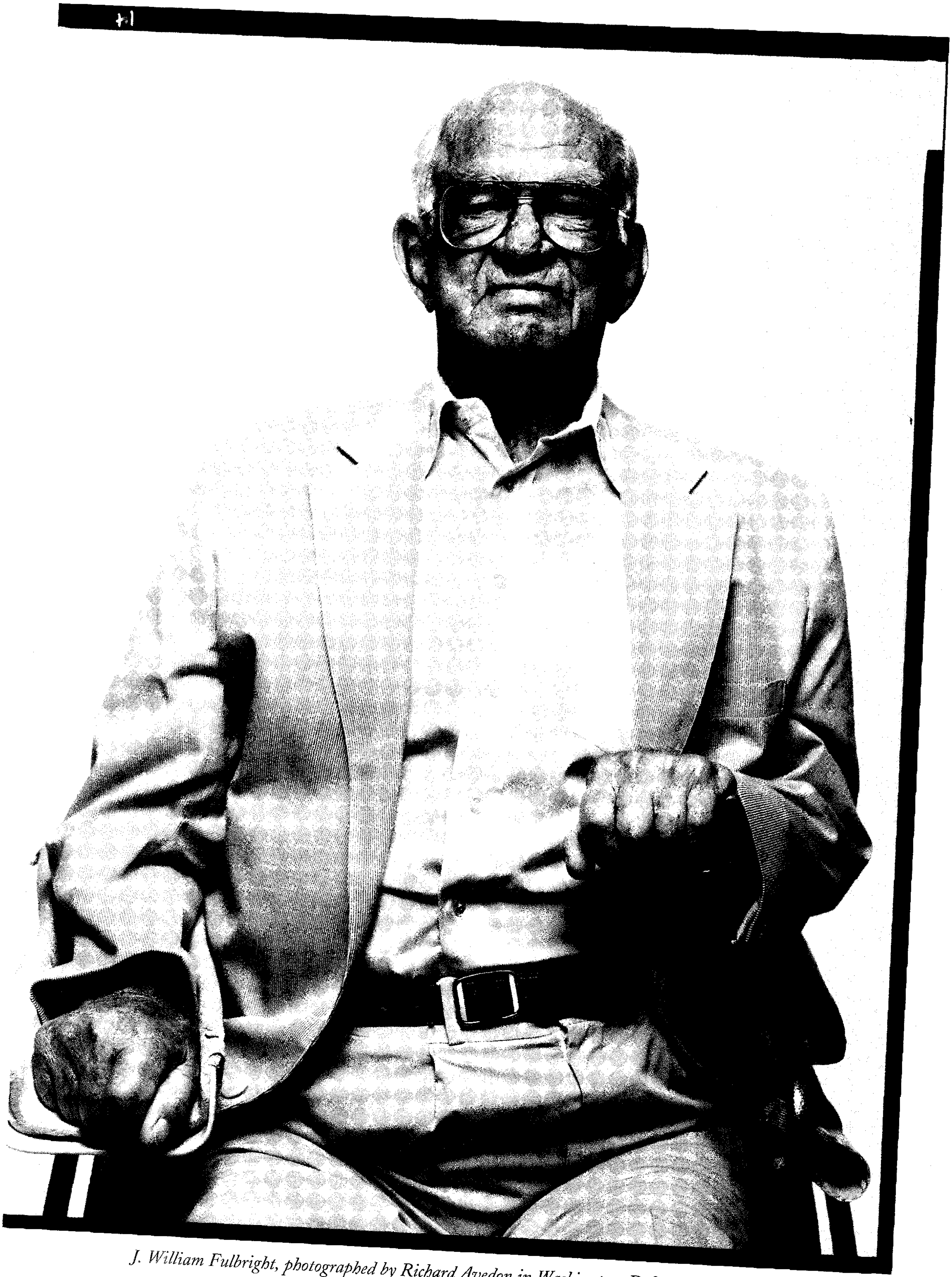
Two years later, after some agonizing, Fulbright conducted hearings that eviscerated Johnson's Vietnam War policy. He did not indulge in moralistic denunciation. Rather, he warned against the "hotheaded romanticism," "ideological preconceptions," and "abstractions" that led great nations, in their arrogance, to grievous mistakes. Time and again, Fulbright referred to the irrationalities of the Confederacy and the McCarthy period. Johnson, following the counsel of the best and the brightest, rejected that of his old friend—the wisest.

Yet Fulbright was not above the compromises, even the Faustian bargains, inherent in politics. "To be a statesman you must first get elected," he said. So he made a deal with himself to appeal to the prejudices of his constituents on race, consistently voting against civil-rights bills. ("Old Myths and New Realities," in fact, was Fulbright's unique contribution to a Southern filibuster.) This was the tribute, which he privately spoke of with irony, that he felt he must pay to continue in his worldly role. It also limited that role, making it impossible for President Kennedy to appoint him to his Cabinet.

Now the chairmanship that was wielded by Fulbright is held by Jesse Helms, the anti-Fulbright, for whom the position is an opportunity to rail against foreign aid and the loss of sovereignty, and to issue threats against the personal security of the President who was once Fulbright's worshipful assistant and driver.

In a famous speech on "the arrogance of power," delivered in 1966 as a warning about the dangers of the Vietnam policy, Fulbright remarked, "Fearful and hostile behavior is not rational but neither is it uncommon, either to individuals or to nations, including our own." Interred with him is a large part of the history of the American century.

—SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



*J. William Fulbright, photographed by Richard Avedon in Washington, D.C., July 22, 1993.*

*"Topping our news tonight are whipped cream, nuts, chocolate syrup, and a cherry."*

lars per bowel movement the process of getting her out of diapers had cost her parents about fifteen hundred dollars.

She also noticed that often the parents who turned their children over to her didn't bother to communicate with her. With one employer, she had agreed to work on a child's pronunciation, which was causing him problems in kindergarten. She taught him to say "refrigerator" and "library" and to name colors and letters. One day when she had worked with him for an hour, until he could finally say "banana," his mother came home. To Dominique's amazement, she asked, "Do you want a nanna for lunch? Or should I get somefing from the fligelator?"

She watched parents who brought presents home every night get angry when a child greeted them with a request instead of a smile. "You spoil your kids," she says. "You shower them with everything you can buy. They never learn to wait. You let them talk back to you. If I had behaved that way, my mother would have whipped me. I'm not saying that was good, I would never hit a child, but I wouldn't let them act that way, either."

Dominique was more relieved than surprised when Patty asked her to leave and gave her two weeks' severance. She found another job in the Village with an interior decorator, Amanda, and her husband and two-year-old daughter, Jennie. Dominique had grown to love the neighborhood, with its low buildings and busy streets. She liked having a group of friends in the park.

THIS was a good year for Dominique. She saved enough money for a trip home in August. It was hard to leave again—but she could see that Crystal was doing well. The plan was working. And when she got back she realized that she felt at home here. She was living in her own apartment now, across the hall from Margaret, and she was still seeing the same man. There were few problems at work. Dominique did notice that sometimes Amanda fought with her husband on the telephone. At other times, she locked herself in the bathroom, opened the window, and smoked marijuana—the room smelled of it for hours. Then, late one afternoon, as Dominique wheeled Jennie along Waverly Place, two scary-looking people approached her. They were dirty and were dressed in stained clothes; Dominique thought they acted as if they were high on something. She started walking faster, but the man caught up with her and grabbed the stroller. "I don't like the way you're taking care of that little girl!" he yelled. Dominique pulled away and began to run with the stroller, with the couple running after her. "Hey! That's my little girl!" the man roared as they raced up Sixth Avenue. A group of Dominique's friends from the neighborhood happened to be standing on the corner, and she ran over to them. When she turned around, the couple was gone.

They called the police, and a detective came to the family's apartment. "I was very shaken up," Dominique says. The police told her that there were people who kidnapped babies in New York, especially cute blond babies like Jennie. Dominique expected a big reaction from Jennie's parents: she might be fired; she and Jennie might have to stay inside for a while. "Amanda was cool," she says. "She just took it in stride. She was like 'O.K., Jennie's safe—don't worry about it.' " Then everyone behaved as if nothing had happened.

That winter, the couple separated. Amanda moved with Jennie to a big apartment with French doors on 110th Street—the Upper West Side. Dominique liked her job and she loved Jennie, but she hated the neighborhood. (She says Jennie hated it, too.) It was cold. She was bored and missed her friends in Washington Square Park. Amanda started working at home, and that made Dominique's job much harder: Jennie was always trying to get away from Dominique and bother her mother. Sometimes when Dominique said no to Jennie, Amanda contradicted her. Dominique and Jennie spent a lot of time at the Children's Museum and at the Museum of Natural History, wandering aimlessly past the dioramas and the dinosaur bones and under the whale, with nowhere else to go. "I knew no one," Dominique says. "The neighborhood was scary. The park was far away."

Dominique was unhappy. Amanda was unhappy. "She missed her old life," Eileen Stein, of Town & Country, says, "and she blamed it on the nanny." After a few months, Amanda told Dominique she could afford only part-time help. It was hard for Dominique to say goodbye to Jennie. And when she went back to the agency she found that Amanda had been reluctant to give her a reference—though in the end she did. "This happens a lot," Stein says. "People get very angry when a nanny leaves. It's like a death in the family. Often, they don't want to give a reference."

Families seem to feel abandoned by nannies—even when the nannies have been fired. It's hard to stand back and watch as someone who knows everything about you moves on with her life. When a nanny leaves a family voluntarily, the family fantasy—that the nanny loved the children as if they were her own—is abruptly destroyed. It exposes the unpleasant, almost unbearable truth: that the women who care for our children are working for money. They may grow to love our children or they may not. "It isn't just a job at all," Sally says of the children she currently cares for. "With the parents, I have a professional relationship, but with the kids it's completely different. *They* don't hire me. Laurie will say she loves me because I remembered to put Power Ranger cookies in her lunch—and that makes my day!"

This time, Dominique had more trouble finding a job. She had just moved into the apartment off Cortelyou Road, and she needed money. Against her better judgment, she tried a live-in job on East End Avenue, for a family with one daughter. There was no time off. They asked Dominique to clean out the cat litter. When she refused, they retaliated by keeping her up late to do dishes after dinner parties. "He would come home from work and eat his dinner in the living room in front of the television," Dominique says. "He would leave the plate, he would leave his shoes, he would leave his jacket and the newspaper, and the television would be on. He was the type who had enough money so he expected someone to pick up after him." For three hundred dollars a week, Dominique was not prepared to be that someone. She began to cry at night the way she had cried when she first immigrated. "It was like I was back to Square One," she says. Finally, when her employer insisted that she sign a contract, she left. Town & Country found her a temporary job with a family on Eighty-seventh Street, taking care of two boys whose regular sitter was on vacation.

That's when Dominique came to work for me. I saw her name on one of several private-nursery-school bulletin boards, which had become my preferred means of finding child care. The agencies were expensive and erratic, and when I advertised in the *Irish Echo* I spent two days answering phone calls from unsuitable candidates. I hired Dominique knowing only a few facts: that she had a daughter in Trinidad, that she would work for three hundred and twenty-five dollars a week, and that when I asked her to give my son a bath she seemed to enjoy it as much as he did. I talked to Amanda, who spoke positively about Dominique's time with Jennie, but the

## ON THE BLOCK

### 1. *Lamp, Terra-Cotta Base, U.S. ca. 1925*

If when you're old and musing
Upon my whats and whys
Another one should flicker
Its last before your eyes

Don't worry, they give out, too,
Those burning filaments,
Imagination's debris
Englobed still in a sense

Briefly too hot to handle,
Too dim a souvenir,
Then, for the deft unscrewing
Unless you first, my dear,

Feel for what it shone from,
Ribbed clay each night anew
Hardened to its mission:
Light for the likes of you.

### 2. *Mantel Clock, Imitation Sèvres*

Time, passing, glances at the clock
Perhaps with pity—who's to say?
Still rose and ormolu, its hands
Clasped in dismay . . .

"Stay then, thou art so fair," he smiles,
To put the pretty thing at ease.
"I will, *I have*," the latter sighs.
"Now what, please?

"Teach me to tick without the touch
I took my life from—ah, those years!"
It's dusk; the dial brims with faint
Firefly tears.

The arbiter reviews a face
Flawless in its partial knowing:
"Child, think well of me, or try.
I must be going."

—James Merrill
(1926-1995)

psychologist, Leslie, was the most convincing reference. She seemed more concerned about whether I would be a fit employer for Dominique than vice versa.

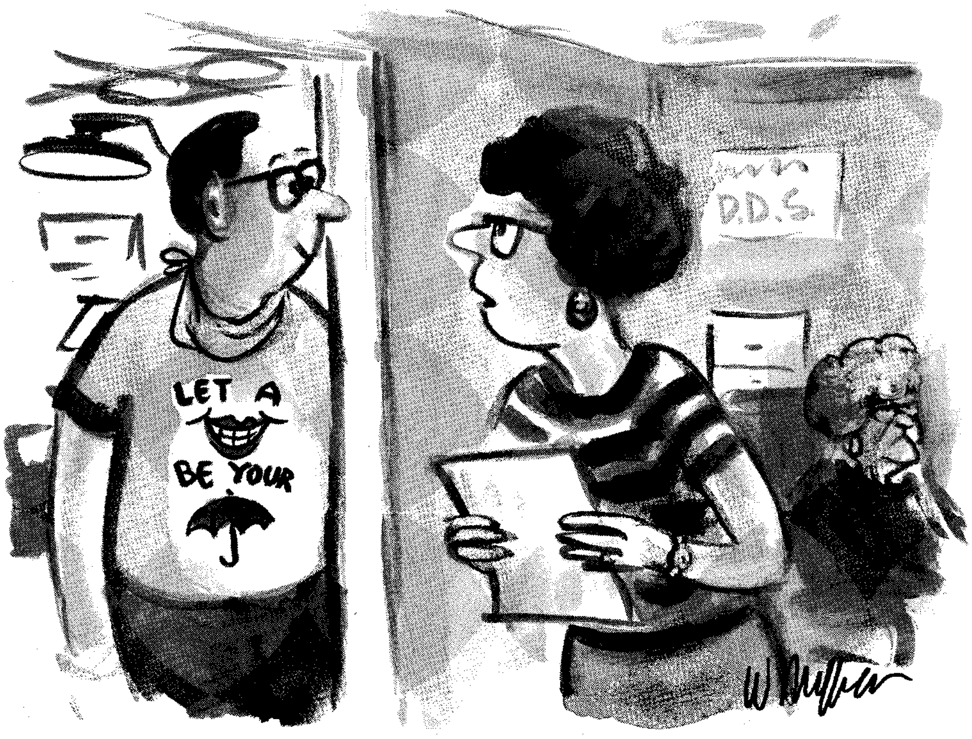
My first conflict with Dominique was over summer vacation. She wouldn't come to the country. I didn't see why I should pay her to do nothing in the city while I paid someone else—Cara—to work in the country. She didn't see how she was going to pay her rent. ("You hired me full time," she tells me now. "What you meant was full time except when you didn't need me, but you didn't tell me that.") Dominique and I agreed that I would pay her a quarter of her salary while we were away, and she would come to the apartment once a week to water the plants. I fumed; she sulked.

Then, there was the matter of my dog, Lydia, a Welsh corgi. When I was busy with the children, I asked Dominique to walk her. After a few weeks, she told me that picking up dog shit was an activity associated with great shame and humiliation in her country; she couldn't do it. I walked the dog, but I thought I was right. I thought she was hired to do anything I would do if I didn't have the time to do it. Now I think I was wrong. I had hired her to take care of my kids, and walking the dog was not part of the job description. She also had to deal with Cara, who still came to babysit three afternoons a week and jealously guarded her close connection to my children.

Dominique worked for me for two years; she left for another job, with my blessing, when my younger child was about to start school and it became clear that I would not need her full time. In the end, if I was able to have a friendly working relationship with Dominique it was because I learned that we were not friends. I found out that when it came to cultural expectations Trinidad was probably farther away from my life than Mars. I learned—though it had taken me a decade—that I couldn't expect Dominique to sympathize with my difficulties, because they looked more like privileges to her. "You New Yorkers are very fragile," Dominique says. "Especially the women. When something is too much for you, instead of handling it, you just break down. Later, you deal with it, but first you break down." I had hired Dominique to replace me as a mother during hours I needed to work—but I couldn't really expect her to replace me. She didn't have the same responsibility I had, but she also didn't have my freedom. I couldn't expect her to do everything I would do—walk the dog, pick up my daughter's dirty underwear—because I didn't *allow* her to do everything I would do. On a bad afternoon, I'll just crawl into bed with the kids, the dog, and a plate of cookies and watch cartoons; Dominique doesn't get to do that. I yell at my kids sometimes, and I have slapped my daughter. A nanny who slaps a child is fired and becomes unemployable.

IT'S late in the morning now, and Dominique and Sally are sitting in the apartment where Sally works, eying the gray sky and talking about their favorite television show, "Melrose Place." Sally drinks coffee while Dominique feeds the baby his formula. Although he's eight months old, he still hasn't been put on solid food. Dominique has repeatedly suggested that he's ready, but her employer seems reluctant to give up the ease and convenience of four-ounce nursettes—prefilled bottles. The nannies all agree that parents don't listen to nannies. When Laurie has a cough and no fever and Sally suggests that she has a cold and could take some Tylenol, her parents send her and Laurie to the doctor, and the doctor, for two hundred and twenty-five dollars, tells them that Laurie has a cold and should take some Tylenol.

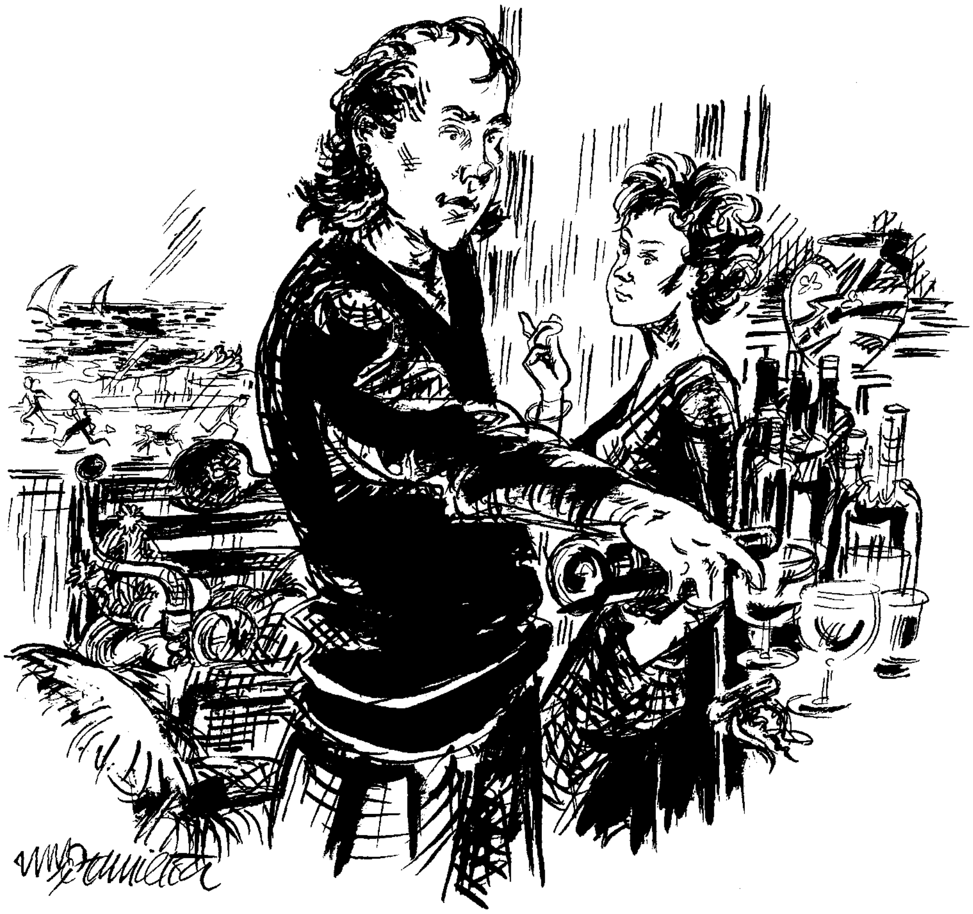
Our generation has made a religion of parenting. Our mothers had Dr. Spock; we have books to fill a ten-foot shelf. They had a family doctor; we have pediatric endocrinologists who specialize in glandular disorders. We love our children passionately, and for me, at least, leaving them—for a week, or even for a day—is the hardest thing I've ever had to do. This makes the person who takes care of them in my absence both indispensable and somehow an agent of separation and doom—much more than a simple employee. In many families, where women take on most of the job of raising the children, along with doing their outside jobs, the nanny becomes the true significant other. It's the nanny who works with the mother to create a place where the children can thrive; the husband is at best an assistant to the team and at worst an obstacle to their aims. "It's a fragile situation," Sally says. "I have to come in every morning and assess the mood in the house and take up the slack. In these marriages, the mothers depend on us so that they can work, and the fathers sometimes get off scot-free—a lot of the time it's



*"Old Mrs. Cranshaw is next, Doctor. Better put on your white jacket."*

as if they didn't even have children." Dominique and Sally have decided that the perfect employer would be a single mother with one child.

Honesty and professionalism go a long way toward helping nannies and families get along, but the circumstances of their employment will always be colored by our worst fears. The nannies know everything about us, and we know little about them. They come from alien cultures to fill our culture's most important job—raising our kids. We've decided to let other women take care of our children so that we can give those children a better life. It's an excruciating decision, as the nannies know better than anyone. The truth is, we are more like our nannies than we realize—strung out between the old ways and the new, between the demands of money and the demands of love. They have chosen to give their children less mothering so that they can make more money, and so have we. There are bad nannies and good nannies, just as there are bad mothers and good mothers, but it's our similarities rather than our differences that make the situation so painful.



*"The studio's asked me to see if I can dumb down some Danielle Steel."*

TODAY is Tuesday, and Dominique has taped the Monday-night episode of "Melrose Place," but instead of watching it she and Sally go to pick up Emily from school and then head for the playground on East End Avenue. There they meet up with Lynne, another nanny from Ireland, who works in a building nearby. As the kids play in the sandbox or on the slides, the nannies pass the time talking, watching the boats on the East River, fighting the boredom and the emptiness of the job. There are one or two mothers in the playground, but they cluster on another bench. One of them keeps a protective hand on her son's shiny new bike. "It's like two cliques," Sally says. "They're over there talking about us and we're over here talking about them."

The three friends plan outings for the kids—a pumpkin sail at the Harlem Meer in Central Park, a trip to the local branch of the public library. Once a month, they all head for the Central Park Zoo together. Dominique likes the tropical habitat there, because it's warm. "You spend all day with kids, your brain turns to mush," Lynne says. "The other day, I was at this very sophisticated party and a group of us were all dressed up and started singing around the piano. It should have been glamorous, but pretty soon we were singing Raffi—'Willoughby, wallaby, woo, an elephant sat on you. . . .' It was pathetic."

It's dark by the time Dominique leaves her job and walks back along Eighty-sixth Street. Suzanne is often late getting home; sometimes she calls and asks Dominique to stay and put the kids to bed while she has dinner with a client. When she gets home after nine, she gives Dominique carfare, but it's often impossible to get a cab, and Dominique ends up taking the trains late at night. She never knows quite what her day at work is going to be like, because it's completely dictated by Suzanne's schedule. When Suzanne does get home, Dominique spends a few minutes telling her about the day she missed, about the children's little excitements and crises. It's in her own best interests. If Emily had fallen in the playground and scraped her knees, Dominique would be sure to tell Suzanne; Emily might make the incident sound much more dramatic than it was. Back in Brooklyn, she stops at the Cortelyou Road market and buys two apples and a box of long-grain rice. The rent is due, and she's feeling poor.

At home, she kicks off her shoes and sinks down onto the bed, switching on the television. The day is over. Maybe she'll go next door, where her neighbors are always watching a movie or cooking something good or opening some beer. There's a war far away. There's a plane crash in the Midwest and a riot in Ireland and a traffic jam on the Deegan. Maybe she'll get up and make some dinner. From the window, off in the distance, she can see the lights of airplanes circling Kennedy Airport. ♦

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And, for *Evening Sun* readers, "Ziggy" by Tom Wilson will join the comics pages lineup. The lumpy character with the rye observations has been a long-standing feature in the morning *Sun.—Baltimore Sun*

Just two of his comments on whole wheat to go, please.

## THE LITERARY LIFE

# A VERY ENGLISH STORY

*Martin Amis is at the center of a feud that has landed the British literary establishment in the tabloids. But is all the fuss really about his American-size book advance, or is he a safe target in a racially charged battle over the changing profile of the English author? Amis's peers weigh in.*

### BY JONATHAN WILSON

A YEAR ago when I was in England, I spent an evening at the Groucho Club, London's Elaine's. The place was full of journalists; there were no famous novelists in evidence, no British Bret Easton Ellis types propping up the bar, and, of course, no Salman Rushdie. Where, I wondered, was the fabled London literary life? Had everyone gone underground in sympathy with Rushdie? Or had middle age put its familiar check on evening activities—the kids, the homework, the unbearable tiredness of being?

I visited London again this Christmas, in the hope of interviewing a number of writers and learning more about the Brit-lit scene. On the plane over, I read an advance copy of Martin Amis's forthcoming novel "The Information." The book—a portion of which begins on page 108 of this magazine—is a probe into the recesses of literary envy in West London, via the rancorous "friendship" of two novelists, one hugely successful, the other a total failure. It already had a gossip-driven reputation as a roman à clef. Julian Barnes, Amis's close friend and the acclaimed author of "Flaubert's Parrot" and "A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters," was rumored to be the "original" of the character Gwyn Barry, the successful author.

At one point, Richard Tull, the failure, explains, "All writers, all book people, were Labour, which was one of the reasons why they got on so well, why they didn't keep suing each other and beating each other up. Not like America." I wondered if the first part was true. Did Amis, for example, get on well with Barnes because of a shared political affiliation, and was it possible that the one wouldn't mind being lampooned by the other in a novel? The pair were known among British writers and fans as schoolboyishly competitive buddies, who played regular games of snooker and tennis, though Barnes was often characterized as gentlemanly and refined—not naughty and regular-guyish, like Amis, whom Sue Townsend, the author of the best-selling "Adrian Mole" novels, once described to me as "a good all-rounder: smoker, drinker, sports player." As for the second part of Richard Tull's reflections, what pair in America have socked each other recently? Mailer v. Vidal is ancient history; McCarthy and Hellman are dead. There are still a few mean-spirited types trying to dish it out to Saul Bellow, but jabbing at a seventy-nine-year-old Nobel laureate is hardly fisticuffs. The *Times Book Review* is full of novelists stroking one another in what amounts to a kind of mutual criticism insurance. Certainly London literary life had to be more complicated.

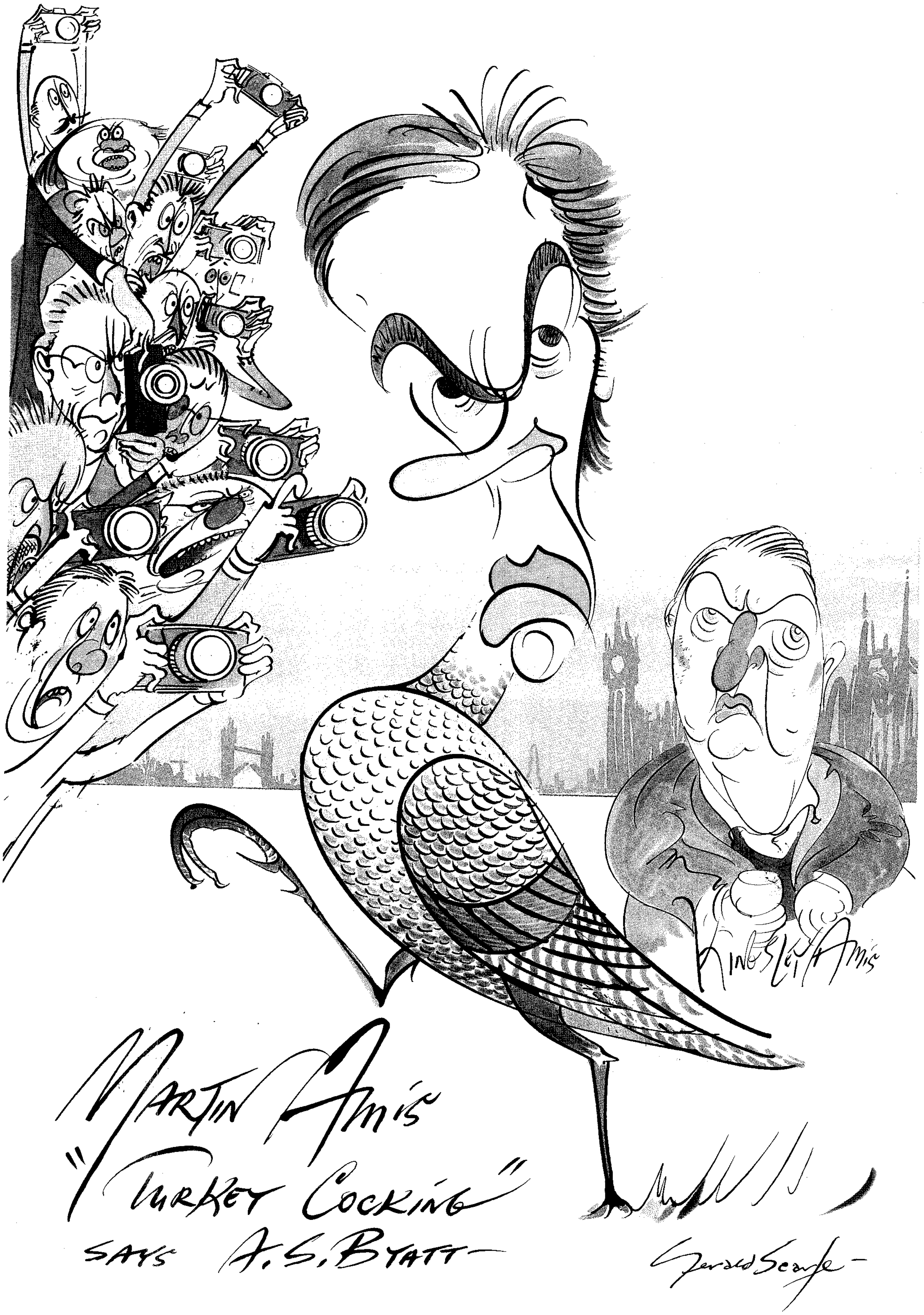
Prophetically, on the way in to Central London my taxi-driver told me a story about his late mother's teeth. "Four years after I was evacuated to Stockport, me mother came up to get us," he said. "She'd had a whole new set of teeth put in. She looked like a bloody racehorse. 'Allo,' she said. 'We're going home.' I said, 'You ain't my mother. I'm not going anywhere with you.' She 'ad to take her teeth out before I recognized her."

The marvellous results of American dentistry—the incisive, unblemished, gleaming rows that allow and sustain the Great American Smile—are globally admired. British teeth, on the other hand, like the taxi-driver's mum's in their prewar state, are well known to be crooked, tea-stained, and loosely held in place by gums ridden with periodontal disease. So it was a shock to discover, not long after I settled into my hotel, that attempts by Amis to save himself from early denturing by submitting to a series of painful surgical procedures on the east side of the Atlantic were a cause célèbre in both the British press and the literary community.

THE news about Martin Amis's gum disorders and molar decay was given to me by the eminent English novelist A. S. Byatt. I had called her in order to set up an interview, but what she wanted to talk about was Amis's teeth and the outrageous, to her mind, half-million-pound advance that he was reported to be asking various publishers to cough up for "The Information."

What on earth was going on? I had only to open a newspaper to learn more. There, in the serious press, was a slew of reports on the "thriller gripping literary London." Martin Amis, through his longtime agent Pat Kavanagh, who happens to be Julian Barnes's wife, was hawking "The Information" around publishing houses with the supposed "stipulated price" that had so offended Byatt. Kavanagh was reported to have secured an offer for her client in the region of four hundred and sixty thousand pounds from the Rupert Murdoch-owned house of HarperCollins. But Amis was reluctant to leave Jonathan Cape, the distinguished Random House imprint he had been published under throughout his career, and which owns his backlist. Cape, however, was refusing to come up with the moola. Its bid fell a couple of hundred thousand pounds short. Critics like Byatt—and there were many—thought it implausible that a literary author like Amis could earn out a five-hundred-thousand-pound advance, and regarded at least half the money as "a gift." But, Peter Hillmore wrote in the *Observer*, "Authors may be salivating at the thought that books worth about £250,000 can get twice that from pub-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERALD SCARFE


Martin Amis
"Turkey Cocking"
says A.S. Byatt
Kingsley Amis
Gerald Scarfe

lishers." In the meantime, Amis had dropped out of sight, leaving the deal in limbo. He was thought to be off in America or the Caribbean.

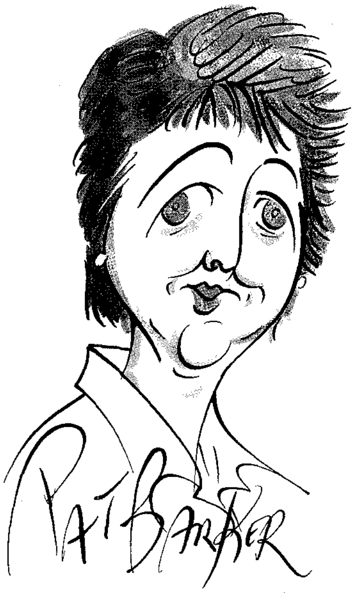
I HEADED up to Durham over New Year's weekend to meet the novelist Pat Barker, whose two most recent novels, "Regeneration" and "The Eye in the Door," which center on the aftershocks of the First World War, I had admired very much. I went by train from King's Cross, and spent the three-and-a-half-hour trip regretting that I hadn't laid out the extra seven bucks to avoid the overcrowded, smoke-filled second class and stretch out in one of several entirely empty premier-league carriages. I should have known—I spent the first twenty-five years of my life in England—but during two decades in America I'd forgotten how to behave like a long-suffering Brit.

The train passed through Doncaster—farther north in the country than I had ever been before. There were flowerpots full of pink geraniums and bronze chrysanthemums decorating the station platforms, and I was thrilled to see a boy and a girl playing cricket far out of season. Outside York, a river had overflowed its banks and flooded a soccer field, leaving only the crossbar of each goalpost visible. Every second house we passed—or so it seemed—sported a mini satellite dish. As the journey progressed, I felt increasingly alien. My mother, who is eighty-five, has lived in London all her life, and, although she is a sometime visitor to foreign climes, she has never ventured more than ten miles north of the city. "There dragons lie" is more or less her watchword—by which she has always meant there Gentiles lie.

Durham is a cathedral city, which means that you have to go and see the cathedral, and I did. St. Cuthbert is buried there. Then I wandered around the center of town: there was not a West Indian or an Asian face to be seen. I went into the local Waterstone's bookshop, where I discovered that there were individual sections for Martin Amis and Julian Barnes but none for the local author I had come to see.

I took a cab out to Pat Barker's house, which was in the middle of the second-largest housing estate in Europe, a vast sprawl of almost identical streets featuring neat semidetached brick houses. I was soon chatting with Barker, sitting on a couch in her front room. She has a reputation, inspired by her early novels, for being "gritty," which, she told me, she is "sick of." She certainly wasn't tough-looking: she is fiftyish and heavyset, and wore a long cardigan, a dark skirt, black stockings, and reassuringly domestic carpet slippers. While we sat in front of a gas fire that flamed over artificial coals, her husband, a biology professor retired from the local university, pottered about in the kitchen making tea.

Did she mind being out of London and distant from the scene? No, because in London "cliques were disproportionately powerful." The London clique that I think Barker had in mind incorporated the group of novelists associated with Amis and Barnes—a group that outsiders sometimes refer to as the Boys' Club. This loose affiliation of friends, some of whom no longer live in London, includes Rushdie, Ian McEwan (the author of "Black Dogs"), and the travel writer Redmond O'Hanlon, along with a couple of extras, like the American Bill Buford, the longtime editor of the literary quarterly *Granta* (and soon to be the fiction and literary editor of this magazine), and Amis's best friend, the expatriate journalist Christopher Hitchens, who lives in Washington, D.C. Most of them attended Oxford or Cambridge in the late sixties and early seventies. Will Self (the author of "My Idea of Fun"), who is, along with Jeanette Winterson ("Sexing the Cherry"), one of the best-known members of a younger generation of highly successful novelists to emerge from Oxford, described the Amis group to me, hip-hop style, as "the Oxford posse." (Aspiring authors please note: there are no creative-writing courses at the university.)



*"With a sort of more exotic ethnic mix in his bones, Amis would have been Bookered by now."*

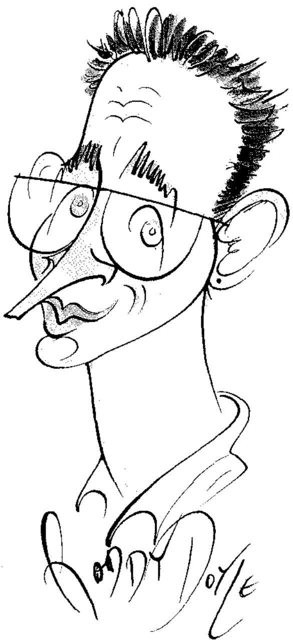
I asked Barker if it was true that cracks were developing in the literary ur-friendships. Someone in London had told me that Amis and Rushdie were rumored to have fallen out over whether Beckett was a great writer or merely a good one. Would Amis's monster advance, or the content of his novel, release hidden jealousies? Or had jealousies fuelled his demand for a monster advance? Barker didn't think so, but the English papers certainly did, citing Barnes, McEwan, and Jim Crace—who had recently received a two-book, four-hundred-thousand-pound deal from Cape—as the casualties of Amis's amour propre. Moreover, almost all the regular "boys" had new novels coming out this year, and so did other heavy hitters like Kazuo Ishiguro ("The Remains of the Day"), the Nigerian-born Ben Okri, and Hanif Kureishi, the author of several films and novels about Pakistanis living in London. The competition for the Booker Prize, the country's high-profile award for fiction, was going to be intense and fraught.

Barker, warning me that she was about to utter "things you're not allowed to say," explained that she felt there was an unspoken—unspoken because politically incorrect—conflict surrounding the prize. "I think that there is a certain amount of unacknowledged resentment among, to put it bluntly, white native British writers, on the ground that the additional tinge of exoticism when it comes to the Booker Prize does a writer no harm at all," she said. "It's difficult to articulate this in a way that does not sound racist, but there's a sort of resentment that the Booker judges are so obviously straining to be unparochial and exotic, and the Booker is so bloody important in terms of marketing." Her example of a neglected writer was, well, Martin Amis. "With a sort of more exotic ethnic mix in his bones," she explained, "he would have been Bookered by now, you see." She shrugged and added, somewhat wistfully, that "the homegrown English novel is really rather undervalued now."

Before leaving, I got into a discussion with Barker's husband about the Jewish gene pool, which he was interested in from a biological perspective, and which I had always thought was a kind of bell-curve illusion. Some years ago, I became aware of the frequency with which I had grotesque or in some way odd discussions in England about Jewishness and being Jewish. I appear to invite these wacky dialogues, and this trip, I now saw, would not be an exception.

I MET Roddy Doyle, the author of the 1993 Booker winner, "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha," in Dublin, at the downtown office of his manager, John Sutton. Dublin seemed lively and almost spring-like after London: small secondhand bookstores, trendy restaurants, and bright-colored clothes shops crowd the newly renovated quays on the banks of the Liffey. Doyle confirmed Barker's impression that in terms of author profiles it was "uncool to be English, just at the moment," but—though he himself, at thirty-six, looked impressively cool, with a stud earring and a sharp haircut—he insisted that the vagaries of trend and style which pump up one set of writers and deflate another shouldn't be taken seriously. "It's a temporary thing—things go in and out of fashion," he said. "Ireland was very sexy a couple of years ago. Scotland for the next year or two is extremely sexy, which is great, because a lot of Scottish writers will get the attention they deserve—a lot of crap will also get attention which it doesn't—but at the moment it's just not sexy to be English."

I wasn't sure about the sexiness of the Scots. James Kelman's novel "How Late It Was, How Late" stirred up an enormous controversy when it was awarded the 1994 Booker Prize in October. One of the judges publicly criticized the panel's decision and expressed outrage at the novel's unrelenting bad language. But even the resulting publicity did not boost sales much. The English couldn't seem to get their heads around demotic Scotspeak.



*"At the moment, it's just not sexy to be English."*

Doyle pointed out that in any case the panel was different every year. "The healthy thing about this," he said, "is that most people who read books don't give a fuck: they don't care whether something is in or out, or whatever." What the "more staid" English writers had to do, he said, was embrace a broader definition of what it is to be an "English" writer. He went on, "What *is* interesting is that probably the better books have been coming not from England per se but from the old colonies of England, like Ben Okri's book, and Rushdie's books—you could include the Irish writers, like Banville, McGahern, meself, and Pat McCabe. In England, there's still a grammatical tightness; the rules are still held as sacred, and you get a lot of wordplay and a lot of cleverness, but you don't get, as in Okri and the others, the healthy contempt for the strict Oxford grammar or the Queen's English as such that produces terrific writing. It's also in evidence in a lot of American writing: that ability to make literature out of the way people really speak."

The ascendancy of the Empire Strikes Back writers is not a new thing in England: Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri, Hanif Kureishi, and all the rest who fall into the group that Ishiguro, when I met him, called simply "the writers with funny names" have been raking in the prizes and accolades for more than a decade. (Rushdie won the breakthrough Booker in 1981 with "Midnight's Children"; Ishiguro got it in 1989 with "The Remains of the Day," and Okri in 1991 with "The Famished Road.") What *was* new had been registered by Pat Barker, if her sense of the embattlement and expanding resentment of "white native British writers" was accurate.

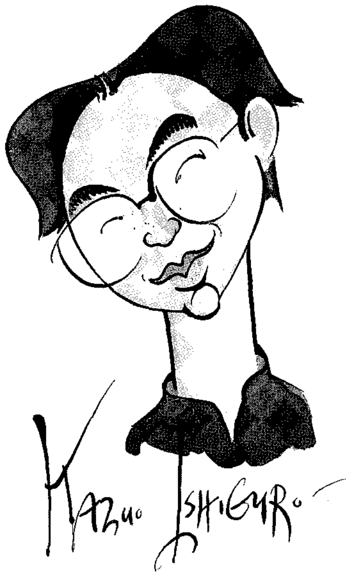
I didn't think at first that any of this had anything to do with the current Amisfest—"It's an extraordinary amount of money" was Doyle's comment—but as the press campaign against Amis mounted, it dawned on me that, far from being passed over for the Booker Prize because he wasn't exotic enough, Amis had become a focus of hostility precisely because he had crossed over to the other side and associated too much with Americans—including his current girlfriend and a favorite fellow-author, Saul Bellow—*and* with misfits from the other old colonies. He had become a dangerous mid-Atlantic hybrid—the papers had him shooting "pool" in London pubs rather than playing snooker. What was more, the papers gleefully reported, he played poker with Salman Rushdie. When I read this, I remembered viewing with astonishment a post-*fatwa* photograph of Rushdie in the *International Daily Express* which was captioned, "Rushdie: ugly." The columnist, indifferent to the novelist's fate, noted how unfortunate it was that, with Rushdie so much in the news, poor Brits had to see so much of his "ugly mug." In the furor surrounding Amis's supposed greed and vanity, the fair-haired, Oxford-educated, quintessentially English scion of a famous literary family had become, emphatically and irreversibly, an undesirable alien.

BY the time I returned to London from Dublin (plane reading: "If Martin Amis is worth £500,000 then Roddy Doyle is worth five and a half million"), A. S. Byatt had gone public with her Amis-angst in the London *Evening Standard*. "I always earn out my advances and I don't see why I should subsidize his greed, simply because he has a divorce to pay for and has just had all his teeth redone," she said. "He must believe that his name is so extraordinary that anyone will pay an extra £250,000 simply to have him on their list. It's *folie de grandeur*." It was also, according to Byatt, "male turkey cocking." Her words appeared beneath a large, unflattering photo of an openmouthed Amis with a beer bottle in his hand, captioned "Martin Amis: Brought in American agent known as The Jackal to secure new book deal."

The Jackal? None other than the New York-based Andrew Wylie, whom Amis (now back in town) had chosen to supplant Pat Kavanagh as his chief negotiator. This move led to much bitterness. Kavanagh was reported to be "hopping mad," especially since (it was also reported) she had already secured Amis the offer of four hundred and sixty thousand pounds from HarperCollins, which was close to what he wanted. It wasn't discernible to outsiders—or to the press—what exactly had taken place between author and agent, but clearly there had to have been a serious breakdown in the relationship for Amis to put not only his long business association and friendship with Kavanagh but also his deep, long-term buddiness with Julian Barnes on the line.

Amis's decision to swap agents in midstream, whatever its moral twists and turns, fed the press's developing fit of anti-Americanism. It didn't help that Wylie is a man with a considerable reputation for discourteous agenting behavior: it's said that he "poaches" clients from other agencies, a practice he defends by saying, "Authors are grown up. They can make their own minds up." He is often credited in New York with having turned the formerly gracious world of literary representation into what one journalist called "a Sergeant Bilko-like free-for-all of improbable deals." Needless to say, Wylie, who once famously stubbed out a cigarette on a copy of Bellow's "More Die of Heartbreak," is the subject of numerous rumors and malevolent characterizations: the Brits pegged him "the Robert Maxwell of agenting" and "the demon king." But, for all his devilishness, Wylie had never, as far as I knew, been referred to as the Jackal—or, if he had been, it was certainly not often enough for him to be "known as" the same within hours of landing at Heathrow.

While I was in London, Salman Rushdie told me that when Penguin had conducted a cryptographic security report regarding "The Satanic Verses" during the early days of the *fatwa* all the major players were given ornithological code names. Rushdie himself was referred to as Arctic Tern, while his agents, Wylie and his London-based partner Gillon Aitken, were designated Vulture and Buzzard. In the current crisis, it seemed to me that the Jackal was an even sharper substitute than the predictable bird of prey, because it twinned the agent with the nefarious Carlos, international terrorist supreme. Wylie, his sobriquet indicated, had come to blow up literary London.



*"There was a feeling that if people in Kuala Lumpur weren't interested in British values, well, they damn well should be."*

Despite the creeping column inches—"AMIS CALLS IN THE MONEY MAN," "MARTIN AMIS GOES THE WAY OF THE 'JACKAL,'" "MARTIN AMIS ATTACKED IN £500,000 'GREED' ROW"—I did manage a lengthy interview with Ishiguro during which the subject of the book deal barely surfaced. There was, I thought as I listened to Ishiguro outline with great clarity the cultural shifts and upheavals of the previous fifteen years, both the silly stuff (teeth) and the serious stuff (how literary Britain was managing the imploded empire). In retrospect, my conversation with Ishiguro offered a way of understanding how the serious stuff generated the silly stuff.

I met Ishiguro at his home. We sat at the kitchen table, talking about his experience as a non-English, non-white writer in British society. As he was spelling out the differences between his own London schooling and that of a writer who had grown up and been educated in India, where you get "a kind of quasi-British education," his wife, who is Scottish, said, with lovely comic timing, "I'm afraid you'll have to stop talking about quasi-British education, because the cleaners are here." We decamped to a coffee bar not far away, on Golders Green Road, which is—appropriately for a discussion of ethnic dilemmas—the heart of Jewish London: the home of Bloom's Kosher Restaurant, Carmelli Bakeries, and several other establishments where the shop signs appear in both Hebrew and English.

Ishiguro does occupy a singular place in British writing: he is neither native-born nor a descendant of the Old Empire, and thus stands outside the peculiar charged and ambivalent relationship between the ex-colonies and Britain. His family came to London from Nagasaki in 1960, when he was five. His father was an oceanographer working for the British government, and for the first few years on English soil the family "never saw another Japanese face in the street." Ishiguro told me, "Once, a Korean guy came to visit us simply because he was in the country." He sees his situation as very different from that of his Old Empire contemporaries—Rushdie, who came to England from India to attend public school, at Rugby, or Okri, who grew up in Nigeria. "For me, there wasn't this question of 'Do I belong to an inner community trying to preserve some values different from those of the larger community?'" Ishiguro said. "And then, as a writer, I haven't had to struggle with this idea: To what extent do I have to be a voice for the experiences of my people?"

Ishiguro described the revolution inaugurated by the success of "Midnight's Children." He said, "Until relatively recently, there was a feeling that British society was so important in the world that if you wrote about it you were automatically writing about big themes. And if people in Kuala Lumpur weren't interested in British values, well, they damn well should be, and they could learn a lot by reading about British life. British novelists didn't need to think internationally or project their imaginations beyond their own lives and circles. They knew with great authority that British values and British society were de facto of international importance. The new generation—Amis, Barnes, Mc-

Ewan—didn't have these assumptions; if anything, they might even have started to suffer from an inferiority complex. They knew that it was hopelessly insufficient to write out of your own experience. Somehow, British culture had become peripheral to the big themes of the time: the great clashes between Communism and capitalism, between the First World and the Third. The front line was somewhere else."

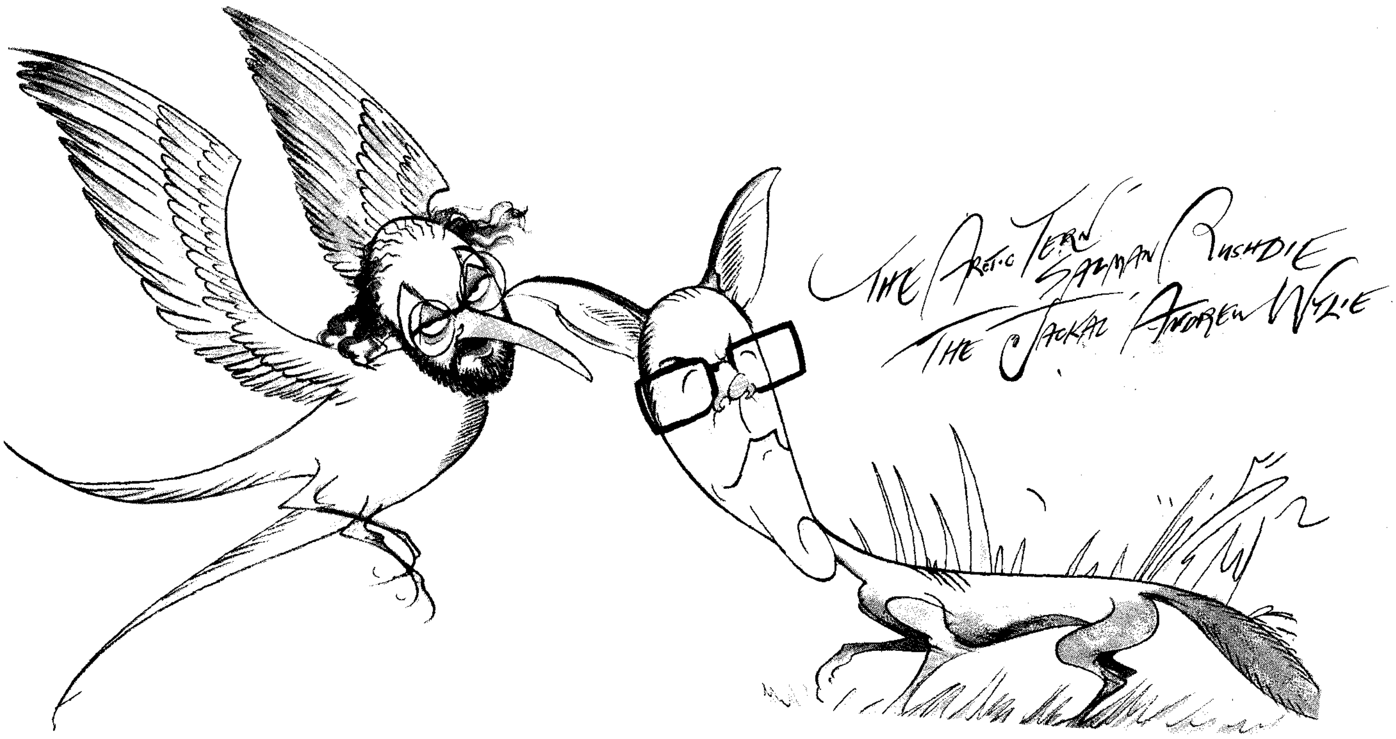
Ishiguro outlined the demise of the kind of book that was disparagingly known as "the Hampstead novel"—named for the formerly bohemian, now simply trendy and expensive North London borough whose M.P. is Glenda Jackson. "You couldn't write anymore on the assumption that the reader would be that fascinated by the small nuances, the differences between the lower-middle-class boy and the upper-middle-class girl. You couldn't spend three hundred pages explaining why their relationship couldn't quite work and how embarrassing it was for one at dinner parties of the other. And I think if there is some sort of difference between the younger generation and the writers who wrote in the sixties and seventies it is that the younger group are consciously or unconsciously trying to make their fiction wider. There is a feeling of writing from a society and a place that are not central, and they have to look to Europe, or to the Third World, or to America, whether in subject or technique, if they're going to write big, important things."

WAS Martin Amis a kind of scapegoat, suffering a backlash against internationalism, with A. S. Byatt spearheading (whether she had intended to or not) a rearguard action on behalf of "British" values? I began to think that this was the case, and that he in particular had been selected as a punching bag because the press and garden-variety "resentful" novelists felt increasingly uncomfortable criticizing prize-winning novelists "with funny names." By attacking Amis, you could shaft "otherness," without appearing to do so—that is, without even knowing you were doing so. All the anger at "foreigners" seemed to have been displaced onto Amis: he was the blond as black, the Brit as American, the Englishman as Asian.

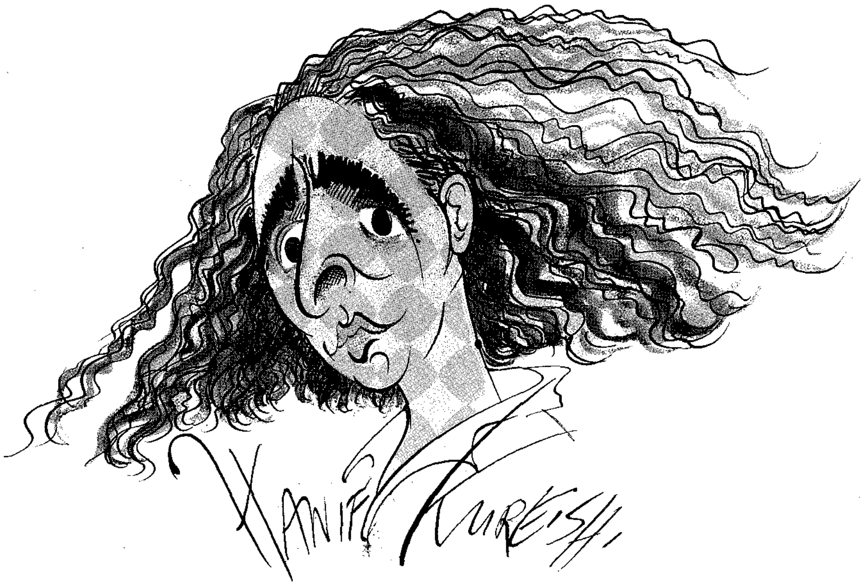
And it wasn't long before the "British values" press was pitting Amis *père* against Amis *fils* in an Oedipal struggle over hard cash and reputation. Sir Kingsley—who himself recently received some three hundred thousand pounds from HarperCollins for a two-book contract—was reported by the London *Times* to be "taken aback by his son's success." There was no basis for this interpretation, other than Sir Kingsley's failure to offer an effusive statement when a journalist asked him to comment. The theory that Dad was miffed was put forth, it seemed to me, in order to champion the conservative, insular, Little Englander, Larkinesque views associated, rightly or wrongly, with Amis Senior's novels.

I began to wonder about the continued speculation in London that Julian Barnes was Amis's character Gwyn Barry. I had repeatedly been told so, with great assurance—though off the record, of course—by editors, publishers, and novelists. But Amis, during a brief phone call when we tried to arrange a time to meet, had assured me that such was not the case, and that Pat Kavanagh had not associated the character with her husband when she read the manuscript. Maybe what lay behind the gossip was a desire to see Amis ruthlessly satirize his friend and thus bring on the ultimate saloon-clearing dingdong—one that would make space for the next generation of tennis-playing fighter-pals. I would have liked to ask Barnes for his view of all this, but he had politely declined my invitation to talk.

"Why," the *Mail on Sunday* wanted to know, deep into the second week of Amis's trial by newsprint, "did the forty-five-year-old, shabby-chic author formerly happy to play pool in London pubs while writing original, blokeish novels become a swaggering Manhattanite paying £20,000 bills for cosmetic dentistry?" The answer, as the accompa-


The Arctic Tern Salman Rushdie
The Jackal Andrew Wylie

nying headline, "AMIS AND THE BOOK BABE," had already alerted us, was, of course, a woman. Worse, an American woman. It was odd that no one had thought of this before. Well, in fact people had, but, distracted by the greed issue, attempts to *chercher la femme* had been somewhat halfhearted, and the *Mail's* was the first full-blown nice-English-boy-gets-runaround-from-power-surging-U.S.-fox scenario to hit the presses.



*"If someone says, 'You fuck off home, you Paki,' you have to laugh about it. The levels of irony—you would get lost in them."*

The woman in question was Amis's girlfriend, Isobel Fonseca, who is a writer—like Amis, a client of Andrew Wylie's—and someone in possession of what used to be called an independent income. Things began to shape up quite nicely now: the American woman was responsible for Andrew Wylie, for the teeth (Fonseca was repeatedly described as having "persuaded" Amis to go with implants), and, finally, for the supposed rewiring of Amis's soul, which had led him to exchange his healthy British disdain of filthy lucre (see his novel "Money") for a crass American materialism.

Transparent, hypocritical, and stupid though much of the Amis criticism was, it also managed to be down and dirty. The author was frequently described as "living in New York," as if he were Kim Philby in Moscow. Since Amis has two young children in London, who could hardly be expected to traverse the ocean in order to see their father, this was a particularly ugly charge. It was hard to imagine how any of Amis's "crimes"—gum surgery, heterosexual love affair, attempt to get as much money as possible for his creative work—could cause as much as a ripple in the United States (unless the author was Newt Gingrich), and they didn't. They were noted briefly in the New York *Times* by Sarah Lyall, a reporter who lives in London. But in England this depressingly cruel assault upon a British literary personality ballooned until it took on the surreal atmosphere of a ritual sacrifice.

WHEN I spoke to Salman Rushdie—by phone, of course—I thought I'd put off Amis for a bit and begin by asking about the response to his new book of stories, "East, West." He replied, "It's been very nice, the reception these stories have got, because, broadly speaking, people have managed to respond to them as stories rather than messages in a bottle. It's been very nice to be a writer again. I feel like everything I say or do is treated as an allegory of my situation. The point is that I'm trying to not be defined explicitly by this situation."

Nevertheless, he went on, he felt he still had to contend with "a kind of secondary *fatwa*" that stretched into areas of high absurdity. "I'll give you a trivial example. In the short stories, particularly in the last story, there are pop songs quoted from. If you compare the English and American editions of the book, you will notice that in the American edition I've had to remove the quotation from the song 'The Flintstones' because the copyright owners decided that they were too scared to let me use it. In fact, there are one or two other people—copyright owners of songs I would have wished to quote—who objected before the book was published *here*. Suddenly, I'm too dangerous to allow me to quote from their bleeding pop songs because somebody will bomb Fred Flintstone. I feel this as a fantastic personal insult."

Concerning Amis, Rushdie was enraged on his friend's behalf. He lambasted "the tribe of savages who run the media and who like to have human flesh to eat every so often." He said, "There is a thing that happened to Martin which periodically happens in England when the public print rounds upon the public figure and tries to tear him apart. It really has nothing to do with the money. It's just 'This guy has had it too good for too long—let's murder him.' " His harshest criticism was directed at Byatt. "I do think that A. S. Byatt has behaved disgracefully badly in the matter of Martin," he said. "I think the fact that she went to such lengths to defend what was a media feeding frenzy was fantastically ungracious. This was an attempt to murder a writer, and Antonia Byatt, in my view, became an accessory to that crime."

Rushdie also pointed out that Byatt, in her acceptance speech after winning the Booker for "Possession," in 1990, had announced to the assembled throng that she planned to use the prize money to build a swimming pool at her second home, in France. "Somebody who lives in a glass house on the subject of money would do well to keep her mouth shut, especially on something that she doesn't know anything about," he remarked. "The question of the teeth is really out of order. She makes him sound like his rich American girlfriend told him in some Hollywood way to go have his teeth fixed so that he'd look better in photos. Whereas it's a very serious medical problem. Byatt didn't know that, but that's yet another reason why people shouldn't shoot their mouths off when they don't know anything. Tomorrow it could be her, and if there were articles which lampooned *her* physical appearance and which talked about *her* marital status, she would think that was appalling."

The previous day, I had interviewed Hanif Kureishi, who is one of Rushdie's staunch supporters, in his book- and video-filled ground-floor writing den in Baron's Court. The flat, like Kureishi himself, has a kind of studied roughness that I associate—maybe because my own paperbacks are of the same vintage, or because I know he went to London University—with the ambience of an early-seventies-English-student place. I asked Kureishi what he had read in college.

"I was reading Philip Roth, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Salinger, Mailer—all that bunch. Pynchon. You were lying in your bedroom listening to the Grateful Dead, reading 'The White Negro,' thinking, Wow, or reading *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy*, thinking, It's happening, but it ain't happening here—but it's happening somewhere."

As we both knew, those days had gone forever. The politics had certainly changed, and Kureishi described the current London literary community, in less than enthusiastic terms, as "unserious." He said, "Very rarely will you find anybody in the literary community talking about anything serious. People in London are much more concerned about gossip than about real issues." The exception, he said, had been the *fatwa*. "The Rushdie issue was the one thing that you couldn't make into gossip at first. But now I think it has become 'What's Salman doing? What's happening? Where has he been?'—another kind of joke. Originally, it was a very serious matter." The seriousness had lingered with Kureishi and become the inspiration for his new novel, "The Black Album," which is set in 1989, the year of the *fatwa*, and, like his screenplay "My Beautiful Laundrette," follows the fortunes of a young Pakistani in London who is caught between conflicting influences and values—this time between a seductive group of Northwest London Islamic fundamentalists and his lover, a liberal-arts professor who teaches Prince and Lacan.

Rushdie projected a similar desire to hold on to something serious in the face of the larger community's desire to satirize, belittle, and sneer. He was at pains, for example, to point out that the much vilified Andrew Wylie had in fact acted with great determination and tenacity in the aftermath of the *fatwa*. Both Rushdie and Kureishi conveyed the feeling that this was a country where the racial divisions were much greater than ever before. The literary community was no exception. Kureishi said, "In the seventies, you would be aware that people thought they had to move out of their own small group—invite black people to their houses, and so on." Now there was a retrenchment, and none of the people he knew in London "in publishing, film, television, liberal arts, media, universities, and so on" had any black or "ethnic" friends, "apart from Salman." The rough sores were bandaged over with jokes, or with the deft and defining irony that the British are so proud of and that they love to ridicule Americans for lacking.

In one of Sue Townsend's travel essays, "Russia," which is a humorous account of a British writers' group tour to Moscow in the waning days of Communism, there's a description of an exchange between the playwright Alan Bennett and the novelist Timothy Mo, whose idea of fun is to reproduce aircraft-emergency signals in Bennett's ear. When the playwright can stand it no longer, he turns and says, "Oh ---- off back to Hong Kong, you slant-eyed git!" Townsend comments, "Mr. Mo laughed immoderately; he can give it out and take it back." Maybe so, and in P.C. America, where I first read this anecdote, it seemed like a sign of health that good, old-fashioned insensitive joshing was still possible between consenting adults. But, despite the back-slapping aura surrounding the insult, and the fact that Bennett is no racist, his riposte was paradigmatic of a certain kind of finely honed English conversational move, which effectively paralyzes the insultee: not to laugh at the joke is to be literal-minded and oversensitive in the worst *American* way. When I ran this by Hanif Kureishi, he said, "Very few metropolitan people in England would want to be considered not to have a sense of humor, and the English are very self-conscious about not being considered to be stony-faced about things. So if someone says, 'You fuck off home, you Paki,' you have to laugh about it, and that works all the way through. The levels of irony—you would get lost in them over here." Salman Rushdie confirmed this. "You have to hear the inverted commas around what's being said or you will be called unreasonable, or humorless," he explained. "I have sat in rooms in which people have made racist remarks about Asian people living in England, and when I have pointed out that that includes me, they will immediately seek to exclude me, and say, 'No, we don't mean you,' and when I say but actually they do mean me, and they can't *not* mean me if they're making that general point, then they accuse me of being thin-skinned and getting too easily upset."

On January 11th, the deal for "The Information" was struck. "JACKAL GETS MARTIN AMIS HIS £500,000" ran one headline, although there were reports that Wylie had netted only four hundred and eighty thousand for his author, from HarperCollins—not much more than Kavanagh had. Amis's "betrayal" now seemed even more baffling.

That night, I had an appointment to meet A. S. Byatt at her home in Putney.

*"I have actually been rather like Mrs. Thatcher—I have a kind of housekeeper's purse mentality."*

The taxi took me to a modest Victorian house on a quiet, tree-lined street. Putney, symbolically speaking, is more or less Hampstead on the other side of the river, and Byatt explained how the London air is sweeter there, because the winds blow up through Putney first, before catching the city's pollutants and dumping them in a swirl over Hampstead. Byatt's sister, the novelist Margaret Drabble, with whom she is reported to be in a permanent feud, lives in Hampstead.

We sat in Byatt's comfortable front

room, which was hung with bright Expressionist paintings, and waited for a taxi to take us to the Chelsea Arts Club for dinner. Byatt doesn't hesitate to speak her mind: "Murdoch has bought Amis, and that's fine for both of them." She has a solid physical presence and a large, round head, which combine to make her come across as formidable. There is a strong trace of Yorkshire in her accent, which most English people stereotypically connect with truthtelling and down-to-earth straightforwardness. People from Yorkshire, I've noticed, like to encourage the association.

In a sense, Byatt had won a victory. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that she had threatened to leave her publisher, Chatto & Windus, if any of its sister companies—including Cape, that is—paid more for "The Information" than it was likely to earn. The sale of Amis's novel to HarperCollins made it look as if her pressure had paid off.

As Byatt, herself a client of Pat Kavanagh, talked, she painted a lively picture of well-behaved book-balancing girls lining up against profligate boys. "I have actually been rather like Mrs. Thatcher—I have a kind of housekeeper's purse mentality," she said. "I do think it's a kind of male thing. I think they all puff their chests out and advance upon each other and say, 'I am bigger than you, I am fatter than you, I deserve more than you.' And the person who wrote the piece in the *Independent* on Friday quoted what seemed to me one of the most unfunny paragraphs I've ever read, and said, you know, 'Martin Amis is so funny he deserves five hundred thousand pounds.' Well, however funny he is, it seems to me that that's aside from the economics, unless you're Rupert Murdoch. I am told that my own sales are considerably larger than his. I am not wandering around saying, 'Please may I have five hundred thousand pounds.' Partly because it really would upset me if I kept getting royalty statements with total red. I would feel embarrassed. I'm a Yorkshirewoman. I'm practical. I just think that you should be paid what you earn."

I was interested in the Maggie Thatcher identification. I remembered the line from "The Information" about all English book people voting Labour and getting on so well.

"Getting on so well" had been dealt with in the first five minutes of my visit. Now it was Labour's turn. Byatt hadn't voted Labour for many years—not since she "decided that the Labour Party had become totalitarian." She explained that "left-wing political correctness in this country" had made her "even more anxious," and added, "Does Martin Amis vote Labour? I'd be interested to know." On the subject of Mrs. Thatcher, she was both critical and admiring. "Mrs. Thatcher didn't understand the nature of the poor, didn't understand the nature of the intellectual life, and enjoyed bashing people," Byatt said. Nevertheless, the way in which she had been transformed by writers and academics "into a kind of demon, a kind of wicked witch, a kind of devil-figure" filled Byatt with alarm. "I feel feminist about Mrs. Thatcher, as I do about not many things. That woman had to fight an incredible battle to get accepted by the people she had to get accepted by to become leader of the Conservative Party. She comes from the lower middle class, and the upper classes hate her for having learnt an imitation of their accent." In the end, "she became isolated, arrogant, silly . . . but she wasn't evil in the way in which the left wants to think she is, and I do think that she wouldn't have been hated in quite that way if she hadn't been a woman. Let us be clear: people love figures like the Queen, who have no power and just represent, as it were, the gentle mother; they do not like anything they can call the nanny or the auntie or the governess, and Mrs. Thatcher appeared to be all these things."

It crossed my mind that Byatt's scolding of the bad boy Martin had not been ungovernesslike. It also struck me as paradoxical that Amis's chief antagonist had turned out to be a Maggie apologist, when his fiscal behavior could be seen as admirably Thatcherite: What had he and Wylie done but be ruthless, enterprising, and competitive? Yet it was predominantly the journalists (and one famous author) on the center right who wanted to take a whack at the miscreant novelist.

We weren't quite done with the lefty novelists and the Tories. Byatt said, "Most writers will give this kind of picturesque shudder if you mention Mrs. Thatcher. I find them terribly simple-minded about politics, so on the whole I tend not to talk about it with them if I can help it. Mostly they've got these kind of knee-jerk reactions, which I find boring. I try to talk about books if I can possibly manage it. I mean, a lot of the time, coming back to Martin Amis, we talk about money. Everybody talks about whether they've got enough money. Once people have got enough money, they stop talking about money."

I couldn't help wondering about this. If Byatt had got enough money (after all, her books sold better than Amis's), why was she so annoyed about Amis's money?

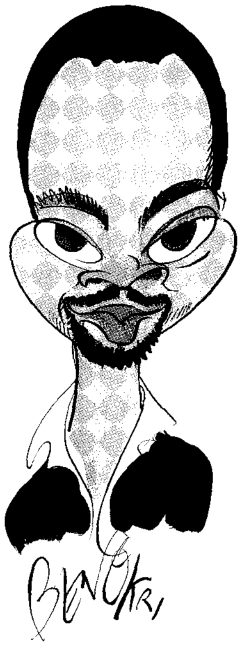
Then I asked Byatt about her view of the Empire Strikes Back. It was like lighting a fuse: her response was Thatcheristically forthright. "Somebody wrote to me from Yale and said she's writing a Ph.D. on the Booker Prize, and her thesis is that the English novel only became daring and experimental after Rushdie won Booker. This is total rubbish. Look at it: Muriel Spark, Lawrence Durrell, William Golding, Iris Murdoch, Anthony Burgess, Anthony Powell—whom nobody yet has rated at his proper level as an innovator technically, but he's brilliant as a technician. All those people were in place, they were writing away, absolutely brilliant. They're all English, they're all white. It doesn't seem to me that anything Rushdie does is anything more interesting technically than what they do—although it's not *less* interesting. What Ishiguro does is certainly no more interesting than what they were doing. Oh! Doris Lessing! She was there. She, in a sense, *is* the Empire Strikes Back, but in her bones she's as English as they come." The Empire Strikes Back, Byatt went on, "is a myth. It's an interesting myth. But everyone talks as though in the fifties and sixties the only living novelist was Kingsley Amis, whom we all agree we hate. There were all these wonderful people if you actually go back. Read Durrell, which we all did in the fifties and sixties—he's technically quite extraordinary. Durrell is a precursor of Mo. If you read Burgess, if you read 'Earthly Power,' how is that a smaller book than any of these books by 'people from elsewhere'?"

The taxi arrived and took us to Chelsea. The Arts Club has a nice arty dark-beamed dining room with a wooden floor and a nothing-too-fancy menu. In the next room are a snooker table (much larger than a pool table) and a bar. Byatt and I drank a fair amount of wine over dinner, and in the taxi on the way back she told me she thought that Michael Ondaatje, the Canadian author of "The English Patient," was very sexy. Once, travelling on the West Coast, she'd been in a dinner group with two well-known women writers and the sex object himself. When Ondaatje left the table for a few minutes, the group had had a lot of fun listing their sexiest male novelists. Ondaatje was at the top. When he came back, they told him, and he was severely embarrassed. Byatt laughed as she recounted this. In response, I found myself tentatively describing a game that my sister-in-law had invented called Six Months on a Desert Island, in which a questioner names two people and the contestant has to decide whom to go to the desert island with. You choose twice—once contemplating the certainty of sex, once definitely without it. There is also the option of early death. Somehow, the game was very hard to explain: Were there four people? Could you choose two and have sex with only one? We subsided into an awkward silence.

Before we got to her home, Byatt told me that she thought Martin Amis was a fine writer. She added, "I do think that a lot of people who rather liked him now rather don't."

AMIS himself had yet to speak, but the papers were still covering him daily. Everybody was wading into the act: A. N. Wilson ("Spare a copper for poor Martin"), Germaine Greer ("Andrew Wylie is my agent too"). And Michael Holroyd, who is Margaret Drabble's husband, Byatt's brother-in-law, and himself the recipient of a famously budget-busting advance for his biography of George Bernard Shaw, declared Amis "a genius" and well worth the money.

Ian McEwan, whom I spoke to by phone, had a theory about the feeding frenzy: he thought that the envy of Amis wannabes was behind the journalistic excesses. "It's not simply that Martin is a novelist, he's a very fine journalist," McEwan said. "It is odd. The heads of privatized industries make enormous salaries, and so do football players, and, in fact, novelists of the Jeffrey Archer type get deals five or six times bigger."



*"There's only one thing that counts. It's the work."*

Will Self had a similar take on things. Self's macabre subject matter and Crowley-, Burroughs-, and Céline-like explorations of imaginative netherworlds, along with his well-known struggles with heroin, have secured him a bad-boy reputation in England, and an editor I know had told me to "watch out" for him. He *is* physically imposing—tall and well built, with a handsome, stylishly distressed face, and blue eyes—but his demeanor was thoughtful, funny, and hardly scary. He turned out to be a Jewish homeboy, who'd grown up in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Hardly anyone in England realizes that Self is Jewish, although his background is fully present in his fiction. The information gap seems to exist because his louche druggie profile doesn't fit the narrow British stereotype of the nature-hating intellectual Jew.

Self was the first novelist I met on this trip to London who claimed to enjoy an active literary social life. He did go to the Groucho Club—he'd been there recently, he said, and had a good time. Most of the novelists said that their contact with other writers was more or less limited to the occasional publisher's dinner party or awards ceremony. A few, bizarrely, claimed that Salman Rushdie was the hub of their social existence. Hanif Kureishi, whose writing powerfully suggests an author who knows parties, admitted that since he'd had children he was generally in bed by nine-thirty. Self reminded me that, while the other writers I'd interviewed were not exactly "old farts," he was at least ten years younger than they were.

On the subject of Amis et al., he admitted that his first impulse was to say "a pox on all your houses," but conceded that this might have been a "conscious desire on my part to isolate myself . . . to be maverick in some way and not feel part of anything." In any case, Byatt's ad-hominem attacks on Amis had disturbed him. "She really bloody well should know better," he declared. "Somebody should put her on their knee and smack her bottom." Self said he thought the entire press coverage had been "pretty shitty, well up to standard," and added, "Boy, is this a slanky town." By comparison, United States literary journalism, stereotypically described as predatory and vulgarian, struck Self as brimming over with politesse. He had been astounded when, in his dealings with the *Times Book Review*, someone had had the "outrageous idea" that he should refer to the serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer as "Mr. Dahmer" in a review he was writing. Still, excess in this direction was preferable to the scribblings of "skinny-ankled minor-public-school boys" suffering from "arrested development," who don't understand how the "nasty stuff" they write "chops through or hurts people."

HAD the nasty stuff chopped through Amis enough to hurt him? When I finally saw him, the following day, at his apartment, in Westbourne Park, his physical appearance certainly corresponded to that of someone who had been beaten up, but it was the dentist who was responsible for his swollen jaw and puffed cheeks. Nevertheless, he looked shaky and exhausted—not in the kind of state that a quick five-hundred-thousand-pound injection into the bank balance usually brings.

"It has an inevitable cumulative effect," Amis said, speaking slowly, once we had settled into chairs, between a pinball machine and a small table covered with newspapers. "I do like to think I'm pretty thick-skinned about all this. I had a lot of stuff when I separated from my wife. I got door-stopped—journalists outside the door—and there were paparazzi chasing Isobel around. For a while, it seemed as if I couldn't go to the can without it being in the *Evening Stan-*

*dard.* So I was thinking this stuff clearly *doesn't* bother me—otherwise I'd be a wreck, curled up behind the sofa in the fetal position."

He attributed his ability to stay, however precariously, on the sofa, uncurled, to having grown up in a home where intrusions and knocks from the press were commonplace. "A lot of the things about being a writer don't bother me, like bad reviews, because it's always been in the household. My position is unique, I think. My father and I both have a corpus of work out there at the same time: that's never happened before. John Updike's son writes some stories, Trollope's mum wrote a novel, Updike's mum wrote a novel, Auberon Waugh used to write novels, but no pair has stuck with it quite the way we have."

I had met Amis a few times at dinners and readings over the years, and he was always eloquent, friendly, sharp, funny. It was odd now to see him trying to make sense of a hostility usually reserved for people who did things like tear up pictures of the Pope on TV.

Amis excused himself to take a phone call, and then went on, "It's mostly incredulity too, thinking, What is all this? But I feel that about my novels, too, in that my novels have violent effects on people one way or the other: interviewers have taken against me quite famously—have written pieces with a hostility that you can't believe—where I've usually got on quite well with them during the interview. My stuff and my personality, up to a point, go to something invidious in people. I write about invidiousness, about injustices, about one-upping."

He talked for a while about the intricate inner workings of the book deal: backlists, actuarial worth, vertical publishing, competing agents, the Balzacian convolutions of the business side of things. He spoke about the agony of breaking with Pat Kavanagh, but he didn't want to explain his precise reasons for doing so. He did say that he had thought, I can't do another divorce.

In the end, he returned to "the deeper mystery of why the violent reaction is there." I was reminded of Byatt's scorn for Sir Kingsley—her real target, it suddenly occurred to me—when Amis said, "I think it's to do with me being my father's son. There was once a gentle joke about me in a *New Statesman* competition to think up unlikely book titles for unlikely writers and one of the winners was 'My Struggle,' by Martin Amis. There's this idea that it's been very easy for me. People were very nice about it at first, saying, 'It must have been tough.' It wasn't tough. It was nice—it increased your confidence. It meant that your first novel *would* be published, out of mercenary curiosity if nothing else. My advance was two hundred and fifty quid. I was going to earn it out." The tough part had come later, with success and notoriety. "There's that, and then there's a womanizing element, which sort of came back with a vengeance once my marriage broke up. But I have to tell myself that it's the books. That's the only way I can live with it. As with most people, people who know me like me. People who don't know me hate my guts. I think that's more true of me than it is of many people."

I asked him if he'd been surprised or perturbed by Byatt's comments, and whether the situation he found himself in had been one of those in which you discover "who your friends are."

His response, especially after the extreme reactions elicited from others, was surprisingly mild. "With the completely understandable exception of Julian Barnes, so far my friends have gathered round me very emphatically," he said. "I've never felt a moment's worry about that. If I saw A. S. Byatt tomorrow, I'd cross the room and shake her hand and say, 'We disagree.' I'm not nearly as indignant as Salman is. I think Salman—in his situation, his fellow-writers are tremendously important to him, and he feels there should be solidarity among writers, as there was around him. But I'm a free-speech fan, and, if A. S. Byatt feels that way, then I don't mind that."

He took one more stab at the roots of the problem. "It's a very English story, I believe. There's tremendous ambiguity, tremendous ambivalence here about worldly success. There's also this idea, perhaps, that writers should be underpaid. I mean, if you're interested in rich people you'd do better to go and visit a few publishers. They're the ones with the big houses, but no one seems to get that. There's a continuing myth that they are wonderful people, like wine merchants or antique dealers—all they want is their five-per-cent profit. People don't understand that that's all gone. It was going in 'Decline and Fall,' where the little guy motors in from the country, but the new guy is running the publishing firm and he shafts everyone. The old boy still comes in and thinks that it's all still gentlemanly. And that was written in what—1930? We're talking about conglomerates now."

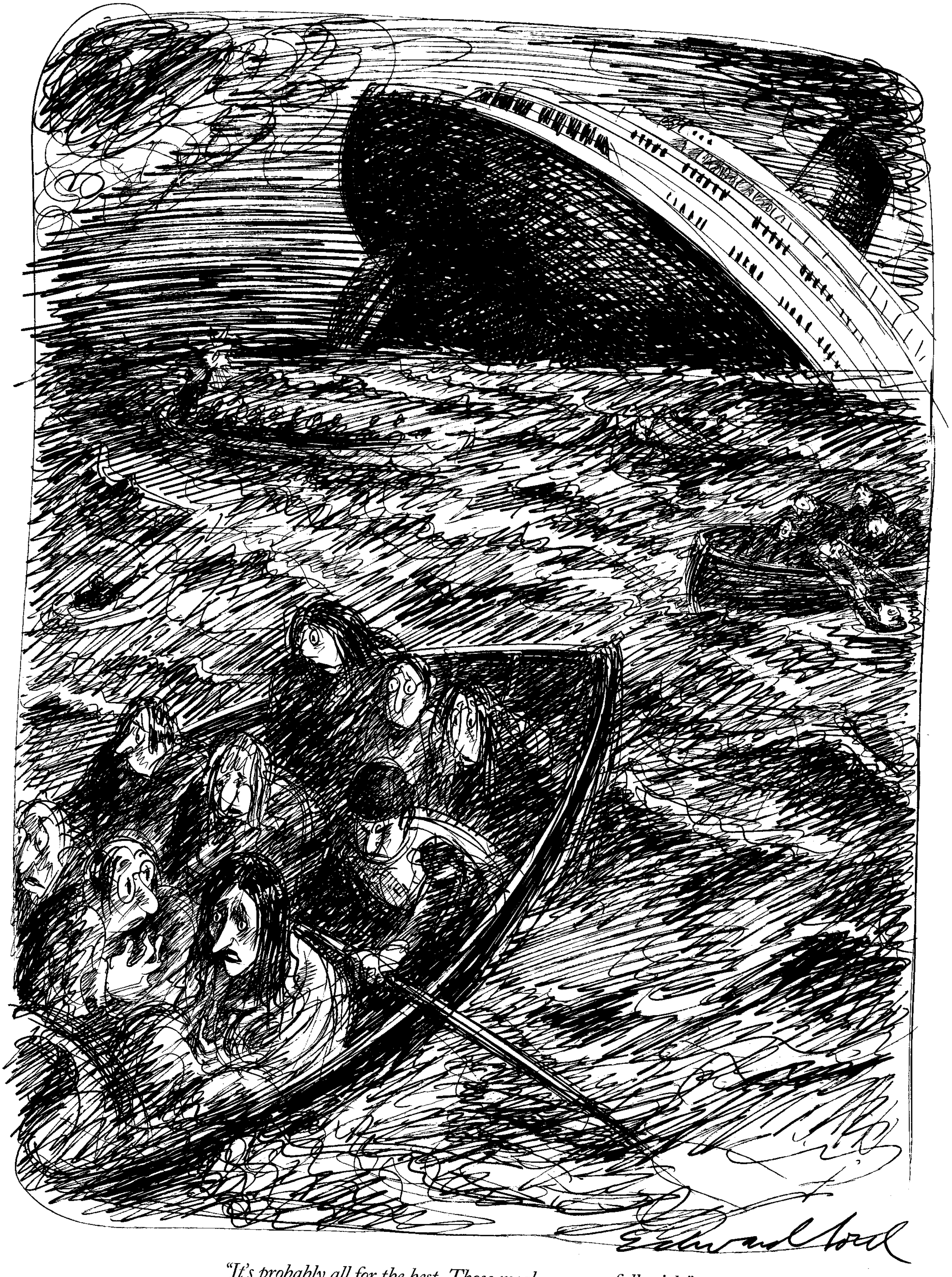
By coincidence, Amis and I were on the same flight to Boston together two days later. I picked him up in my car and told him that the charge for the ride to the airport was two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Somewhere over the Atlantic, when we were well into four miniature bottles of wine, Amis told me that he had been deeply upset by a letter he had received from Julian Barnes. He didn't elaborate.

I thought of the penultimate interview that I had done, with Ben Okri. We were in a Chinese restaurant, overlooking the Regents Park canal at the point where the painted houseboats sit in Little Venice—a spot where Amis was reputedly about to plunk down a big chunk of his advance on a house. Okri, from his window seat, presided over his neighborhood in princely fashion, like Isaac Bashevis Singer at the Cafeteria—waving and smiling at passersby, calling out to people by name.

I had hoped that Okri would provide further insight into the relationship between the Amis-scapegoating and the unspoken racial tensions in England, but he didn't want to discuss the Amis scandal. "It's not interesting to me at all," he said. "There's only one thing that counts. It's the work. The quality of the work."

Then he found he had a view after all. "It's unhealthy, on the one hand," he said. "On the other hand, it's a sign that literature still arouses great passions, even if its passions have to do with envy, jealousy, and malice. What other passions are there? I can't think of an era in history when there weren't pitched battles, whether over the work of the Impressionists, Picasso's 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon' . . ." I pointed out that these were battles over form and content, not money. He replied, "Ours are certainly more sordid times."

As the airplane was coming in to land, I remembered that Byatt had wanted to know if Amis voted Labour. I had promised to ask him. I did so, and, not quite as enthusiastically as Molly Bloom, he said, "Yes." ♦



*"It's probably all for the best. Those meals were awfully rich."*

## FICTION

# WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR FAIR LAND?

### BY MARTIN AMIS

OF the pressures facing the successful British novelist in the mid-nineteen-nineties Richard Tull could not easily speak. He was too busy with the pressures facing the unsuccessful British novelist in the mid-nineteen-nineties—or the resurgent novelist, let's say (for now): the *unproved* novelist. Richard sat in Coach. His seat was non-aisle, non-window, and, above all, nonsmoking. It was also non-wide and non-comfortable. Hundreds of feet and hundreds of passengers away, Gwyn Barry (that rarest of literary phenomena: a cult writer with an audience), practically horizontal on his crimson barge, shod in prestige stockings and celebrity slippers, assenting with a smile to the coaxing refills of Alpine creek water and sanguinary Burgundy with which his various young hostesses strove to enhance his caviar tartlet, his smoked-salmon pinwheel and asparagus barquette, his prime-fillet tournedos served on a timbale of tomato and a tapenade of Castilian olives—Gwyn was in First. Richard was in Coach, eating peanuts. To his immediate left sat someone very young. To his immediate right sat someone very old. And there was Richard, in the middle. The child leaned and pushed and sometimes squirmed up against him in a purposeful way, carelessly confident that its touch would be welcome. Whereas the old guy on his right, coated in his crêpe of age, remained properly withdrawn. Richard found himself inclining to his left, courting the child's thoughtless touch. After all, he was at the time of life when, sitting in a garden or a park, he was more pleased than vexed if a bee buzzed him, flattered that anything, however briefly and stupidly, could still mistake him for a flower.

Was this, then, a renovated Richard we were looking at? You might have thought so. If you had marked him in recent weeks, if you had heard his quite frequent renderings of "Respect," as he showered and shaved (having made love successfully, or at least undeniably, to his wife, Gina, the night before—"*What you want: baby, I got*"), his slurred promise to Gwyn, which helped foreclose an otherwise pleasant dinner, that he was going to run him *out of town:* you might have thought that, yes, here was a writer on a roll. But did he hate Gwyn any less? That would have been the key to it. Did he hate Gwyn any less?

Richard was persisting in the belief that a rewarding experience lay ahead of him, despite his immediate discomforts, despite his adhesive doubts about his American publisher, Bold Agenda, Inc., and despite the pillow of crimson tissue paper that he clutched to his face. Soon after takeoff, while the plane was still climbing, about a period's worth of blood had burst from his right nostril. Now, as he settled down with his beer and his book, and looked forward to the lunch that was edging ever nearer, about a period's worth of blood burst from his left nostril. He bent and squeezed himself toward the aisle, past the child, its single parent, and another, older child, and joined the queue for that most despised section of the aircraft, Toilet World—deep in the machine's rump.

Half an hour later Richard emerged, leaving behind a toilet resembling the kitchen of a serial murderer in slapdash but hyperactive career phase; bent over the basin, he had started like a guilty thing when the P.A. system identified him by name and demanded that he make himself known to the cabin staff. A few last bubbly snorts into the paper towels, and then he squelched his way out of there. In the aisle he saw that a stewardess was coming toward him, looking to left and right and dutifully saying, "A Mr. Tull? A Mr. Tull. A Mr. Tull at all?"

He knew her. He had already singled her out for attention. And we are inclined to speculate whether anyone would really want this—Richard's attention. She was the stewardess who, before takeoff, had been obliged to demonstrate the safety procedure, standing a few feet from Richard's knees. Normally, of course, the task would have been assigned to the electronic stewardess on the video screen. But the image had fluttered and stalled; and so, in some bewilderment, they'd all had to settle for the real thing. The stewardess, and her sign language—the hard old dame of the middle air, nearing retirement, her systems warped by the magnetosphere, and by disuse (he understood disuse), like a madam summoned out of deep retirement for the last thing she wanted, going through the motions with the hand stroke, the knee bend—the cursey curtsies of the stewardess.

"A Mr. Tull? A Mr. Tull at all."

This, too, was the language of the air, this was airspeak; no one on terra firma would ever talk like that. But to Richard's ears, still papery with blood loss, it seemed well said. A Mr. Tull. A Mr. Tull at all.

He owned up.

The stewardess escorted him down the length of Economy, and then another stewardess escorted him through Business World; he ducked under a curtain, and then another stewardess led him into First. As he made this journey within a journey, getting nearer to America, Richard looked to see what everyone was reading, and found that his progress through the plane described a diagonal of shocking decline. In Coach the laptop literature was pluralistic, liberal, and humane: "Daniel Deronda," trigonometry, Lebanon, the First World War, Homer, Diderot, "Anna Karenina." As for Business World, it wasn't that the businessmen and businesswomen were immersing themselves in incorrigibly minor or incautiously canonized figures, like Thornton Wilder or Dostoyevski, or with lightweight literary middlemen, like A. L. Rowse or Lord David Cecil, or yet with teacup-storm philosophers, exploded revisionist historians, stubbornly steady-state cosmologists, or pallid poets over whom the finger of sentimentality continued to waver. They were reading trex: outright junk. Fat financial thrillers, chunky chillers, and tublike tinglers: escape from the pressures facing the contemporary entrepreneur. And then he pitched up in the intellectual slum of First Class, among all its drugged tycoons, and the few books lying unregarded on softly welling stomachs were jacketed with hunting scenes or ripe young couples in mid-swirl or -swoon. They all lay there flattened out in the digestive torpor of midafternoon, and nobody was reading anything—except for a lone seeker who gazed, with a frown of mature skepticism, at a perfume catalogue. Jesus, what happened on the Concorde? Scouring the troposphere at the limit of life, and given a glimpse of the other side, the Mach 2 morons would be sitting there, and staring into space. The space within. Not the space without. In the very nib of the airplane sat Gwyn Barry, who was reading his schedule.

"Hi," said Richard.

Gwyn pulled a lever which caused him to surge up from the supine to the sedentary. He pointed to a little bulkhead table. Richard sat on it, next to the vase of tulips. There were posies everywhere, here in First.

"How are you doing?" said Gwyn. And his eyes returned to his schedule: six or seven sheets, with many a box and bullet-punch, and highlighted and color-coded—TV, radio, press. "Wow, they've really got me gridlocked in L.A.," he went on. "It's all the interest leaking down from San Francisco. Look at that. How can I do the *Chronicle* and then Pete Ellery back to back?" He turned to Richard as if he expected an answer. Then he said, "What have your people got lined up for you?"

"I told you. My editor moved on. They've given me some other Chuck or Chip."

"So what have they got lined up?"

"I said. I won't know till I get there."

"But this is America, man! You got to get *out* there. You got to *go* for it."

Richard waited.

"You got to come on strong. Talk big and kick ass."

"Let's get this straight. Are you trying to be funny, or is it your intention to pretend to be American while we're there?"

Gwyn sank back, and gave his schedule a careless brandish. "You know, you're lucky. This is just show business. While I'm scurrying around out there, you'll have time to absorb everything. Time to think. To ponder. Time to dream. Are you all right, mate? You look a bit green. But it could be the light."

And the light was coming in sideways, and everything looked combustible or already white hot, close to burnout or heat death.

"I had a nosebleed. I haven't seen so much blood since the twins were born. I used up two whole cans' worth of tissues and towels."

"Beautiful flying weather. I got you up here, and it took some doing, so you could see what it's like. For your piece."

This was a reminder of Richard's status. He was coming to America because his most recent novel, entitled "Untitled," had found an American publisher (unlike its three predecessors, which had found no publisher at all). More proximately, though, he was coming to America because he was writing a long piece, for a Sunday broadsheet, about Gwyn Barry and the pressures ranged against the successful novelist in the mid-nineteen-nineties. Now, for Richard's further benefit, Gwyn cast his gaze round the cabin with an expression that judiciously combined embarrassment and mischief. "Who would have thought it? A boy from the valleys. Flying to America first class."

"Do you mind if I use that line?"

"It's nice, though, isn't it? Dead comfy."

"The sickbags," Richard said dully, "look no better or bigger than the ones in Coach. And they still have turbulence here. And it still takes seven hours. I'll see you on the ground."

He made his way back, past "Magenta Rhapsody" and "Of Kingly Blood," past "Cartel" and "Avarice" and "The Usurers," and into the multitudinousness of "Hard Times," "La Peste," "Amerika," "Despair," "The Moonstone," "Labyrinths." . . . Two people—a man in Business and some dope in Coach—were reading "Amelior," by Gwyn Barry: the paperback.

But as Richard shackled himself into his seat (which itself bore the heavy indentation of "The Wouldbegood: A Life of Edith Nesbit"), he had other information to process. Gwyn, Gwyn's schedule, "Amelior," the unfortunate defection of Roy G. Biv, his editor at Bold Agenda: these swayed like loose harpoons from the nucleus of his soul. But he had other information to process—the kind that only comes when life is turning, the kind you have to be there to get, because no one will ever tell you about it. And if they did—you'd never listen.

On his way back through the plane Richard had seen women crying—three women, four women. And he realized that there always were these women on planes, crying, with makeup in meltdown, folded over in the window seat or candidly hideous in the aisle, clutching Kleenex. Before, if he assumed anything, he assumed they were crying about boyfriends or husbands (partings or sunderings), or crying (who cared?) from toothache or curse pains or fear of flying. But now he was forty, and he knew.

Women on planes are crying because someone they love or loved is dead or dying. Every plane has them. The talent on the short hops, the broads on the widebodies, with their clutched hankies. Death can do this; death has the power to do this. Death, which sends women hurrying to the end of the street, to bus stops, which makes them run under the clocks of railway stations, which lifts them five miles high and fires them weeping through the air at the speed of death, all over the world.

While it would always be true and fair to say that Richard felt like a cigarette, it would now be doubly true and fair to say it. He felt like a cigarette. And he felt like a cigarette. His mouth was plugged with a gum called Nicoteen. And he wore circular nicotine patches, from the same product stable, on his left forearm and right biceps. Richard's blood brownly brewed, like something left overnight in the teapot. He was a cigarette; and he felt like one. What he was doing was practicing nonsmoking. He knew how Americans treated smokers, people of smoke, people of fire and ash, with their handfuls of dust. He knew he would be asked to do an awful lot of it: nonsmoking. So he felt like a cigarette, and he felt like a drink—he felt like a lot of drinks. But he didn't drink and he didn't smoke. All he had was the plastic bottle of mineral water that Gina had made him bring.

Richard had never been to America. He used to enjoy telling people this.

"America? Never been there," Richard would say, raising his chin in quiet pride, and looking rather stern.

HE spent his first two hours in New York wearing an expression of riveted horror. This expression of riveted horror was not a response to American violence or vulgarity, to the disposition of American wealth, the quality of American politicians, the condition of American schooling, or the standard of American book reviewing (hopelessly variable but often chasteningly high, he would later conclude). No. This expression of riveted horror Richard came to know well. He looked horrified and riveted because he was staring into the riveted horror of his own face.

In the bathroom, at the hotel. It was a shaving mirror, on a retractable arm, supplementing the broad background of the regular mirror (itself implacable enough). The shaving mirror had a light above it; it also had a light *inside* it. He thought there must be a lot of people who imagine they look O.K., who fancy they can pass for normal, until they meet a shaving mirror in an American hotel. Then the jig is up. Presumably, with the human face, the worst possible representation will always be the truest. This was the best mirror, and it was the worst mirror. All other mirrors were in public relations. After an audience with such a mirror, only two places to go (and maybe the hotel took its cut): the cosmetic surgery or the church.

Next door on the bed lay a bundle of early reviews and a copy of the schedule and some bright new hardbacks and even a spray of flowers, all sent by the publisher. By Gwyn's publisher, that is to say: to help Richard with his piece—his piece about Gwyn. There was nothing from Bold Agenda, no message, no word, and no meaningful reply to the calls he kept making from the bathroom telephone, with his nose an inch from the glass. In twenty minutes he was due upstairs: to listen in on Gwyn being interviewed. Then, when that was over, he was going to arrange to interview the interviewer about what Gwyn was like to interview. Richard left the bathroom and went and sat on the bed and calmly smoked his way through a panic attack. He wanted his twin boys with him, Marius on this side, Marco on that side. Marius here, Marco there. The mirror had told him that his body was close to death, but his mind felt six months old.

Gwyn's suite seemed as crowded as Coach: waiters, the hotel assistant manager, two interviewers, one incoming, one outgoing, two photographers ditto, two lady high-ups from Gwyn's publisher or its parent corporation, and one publicity boy. The room was additionally infested with bouquets, and bowls of fruit, presumably real but impressively fake-looking, and, at some unguessable level of authenticity, the excitement of increase, of reputable profit, the kind you get when commerce meets art and finds it good. Richard sat down near the publicity boy, who, he saw, was not only on the telephone but was physically attached to it: he had a thick wire circling his chin like a pilot's mouth mike, freeing both his hands to cope with his laptop E-mail. He was plumply handsome, the publicity boy, his backswept hair as darkly superlustrous as an oil stain on a blacktop.

"I really do feel," Gwyn was saying, angling his head to accommodate the photographer who crouched at his feet, "that the novelist has to find a new simplicity."

"How, Gwyn, how?"

"By *evolving* into simplicity. By deciding on the new direction and heading for it."

"To where, Gwyn, where?"

"How about if we loop the *Post* guy," called the publicity boy, "and he can just *watch* you do the radio spot?"

"To fresh fields. O.K.: the guy can watch me do Tony Harriman. And pastures new."

"So have the signing after the reading but before the meeting."

"Have the meeting *during* the signing. Phyllis Widener. Richard Tull."

Richard knew from his "Amelior Regained" publicity pack that Phyllis Widener had a bold-print twice-weekly column in one of the New York tabloids: personalities, arts, local politics. Wry seniority was her thing; she was meant to be twinkly and unfoolable. That's what you got when you were old: experience. And maturity, too. In person, Phyllis seemed to be the kind of American woman who had taken a couple of American ideas (niceness, warmth) and then turned up some terrible dial, as if these qualities, like the yield of a hydrogen bomb, had no upper limit—the range had no top to it—and just went on getting bigger and better as you lashed them toward infinity. Only her colleagues and superiors knew that the pieces she wrote, over many hours and many cups of strong coffee in her small and memento-strewn apartment on Thirteenth Street, often and increasingly turned out to be unusably vicious. . . . Richard found a bit of hotel notepaper and a hotel ballpoint and dragged up a chair. He was immediately rewarded with a good bit for his piece: Gwyn pausing mid-word, actually mid-syllable (halfway through "unsophisticated"), like a machine himself, when Phyllis's tape clicked off at the end of its spool; he sat there with his mouth open, on pause, while she replaced it. Meanwhile, too, it became clear that the energies of the publicity boy were directed not to the further accrual of publicity opportunities but to their radical attenuation.

"Unsophisticated approach, then, that's their opinion. I prefer to liken it to carpentry."

"Are you a carpenter, Gwyn?"

"With wood, a poor one, Phyllis. With words, well, I have my molds and templates, my spirit level, my trusty saw."

"I think it's so beautiful the way you say that."

"You know. Pottering away."

The interview ended, and the room thinned out, and Gwyn, who looked fresh enough to Richard, went to freshen up next door. So Richard was left alone with Phyllis; he sat there, rinsed in her entirely embarrassing gaze, and duly began to interview her about her interview with Gwyn. After a minute and a half, he had no more questions.

Preceded by the publicity boy, Gwyn passed through the room. He was expected downstairs in the restaurant, to be interviewed.

"I have been busy," he said to Richard, "on your behalf. How's your schedule? There's a press interview in Miami and a big radio slot in Chicago. And a reading-signing in Boston. I was wondering if you could work them in."

"Why's this?"

"I'm double-dated all over the place. I offered them you. It's all fixed."

"Thanks. Bye."

This was a nonsmoking suite, on a nonsmoking floor. Over half the hotel was nonsmoking. Whereas Richard had dedicated his life to the cause of non-

nonsmoking. He had laid it down, his life. They sat in silence until Phyllis said, “You two are old friends.”

He gave an economical nod.

“You know, he admires your work deeply. I heard him. Telling everyone on the phone what a truly marvellous writer you were. He loves you very dearly.”

“No, he doesn’t. He might want you to think he does.”

Surprisingly, she said, “You think he’s trying to hurt you?”

“He doesn’t need to. The world will do it.”

“So!” said Leslie Evry, settling back in the swivel chair with his hands interjoined behind his head. “What brings you to our fair land?”

Richard had to hear this again. This was great. The whole adventure had lasted five seconds. And here he was: wiped out.

“I beg your pardon?”

“What brings you,” repeated Leslie Evry, with relish, “to our fair land?”

Richard had been asked this question several times already—by elevator men, by barmen. Now he was hearing it from Bold Agenda. He was hearing it from his own future. Of course, Richard liked to think of himself as a virtuoso of rejection; his history of humiliation was long—long and proud. The humiliated are always looking for consideration and getting the unconsidered, the offhand and ready-made. So Richard sat there, devastated, wiped out, by a reflexive banality from Leslie Evry.

“What brings me to your fair land? I somehow ran away with the idea that I had a novel coming out in your fair land.”

“You certainly do. Seen this?”

He was handed a slender flyleaf or bookmark. On it were listed ten or twelve titles. There he was, near the bottom. “Richard Tull. ‘Untitled.’ $24.95. 441pp.” Richard Tull recognized Richard Tull. The other names were not familiar, were in themselves unfamiliar; even the compilers of American telephone directories, he sensed, might have been impressed by their unfamiliarity. The only thing they reminded him of was the cast list of “Amelior” and “Amelior Regained”: Gwyn’s identikit hominids—Yung-Xiao, Yukio, Conchita, Arnaujumajuk.

“Have you heard anything about any reviews or anything of that kind?”

“For sure,” said Leslie Evry. Smartly he flipped open a folder on his desk. “John Two Moons had some coverage in the *Cape Codder*. He keeps a fishing boat up there or something. And Shanana Ormolu Davis had a nice mention in the *Shiny Sheet*. In Miami. She’s working with the hearing-impaired down there. At the Abbé L’Epée Institute?”

Two stamp-size clippings were passed toward him. Richard looked and nodded.

“You know how John Two Moons got his name? It’s kind of a nice story. Apparently—”

“Excuse me. What about ‘Untitled’?”

“Excuse me?”

“ ‘Untitled.’ Twenty-four ninety-five. Four hundred and forty-one pages.”

Then Leslie Evry did a terrible thing. He said “Excuse me?” again—and then lavishly blushed. “Not thus far. Insofar as we know.”

“Is there a *prospect* of any reviews?”

“A ‘prospect’?”

“Is there anyone in the Publicity Department I should be talking to?”

“May I ask what this would be in regard to?”

In the past, Richard had often been known to be “difficult.” *Difficult* was a word that applied to his person as well as his prose. Richard considered being difficult now, and stalking out of Bold Agenda. Then what? A few plangent inhalations on Avenue B? Like all writers, Richard wanted to live in some hut on some crag somewhere, every couple of years folding a page into a bottle and dropping it limply into the spume. Like all writers, Richard wanted, and expected, the reverence due, say, to the Warrior Christ an hour before Armageddon. He said, “Frankly, you surprise me. Roy Biv was full of ideas. As it happens I—”

“Ah, Roy! Roy Biv!”

“As it happens, I’ve already fixed a few things. A reading and signing in Boston. I’m doing the Dub Traynor interview in Chicago.”

“Dub Traynor? For the book?”

“For the book.”

“Well, that’s *great*. Hey. May I introduce my co-director. Frances Ort. Frances? Come and say hi to Richard Tull.”

Bold Agenda, as an operation, was still only half constructed. Frances Ort had not so much entered Leslie Evry’s office as wandered onto his floor space. Behind her, big clean guys in overalls plodded about carrying sections of white

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hardboard. On arrival, Richard had himself plodded about among them for a while, before finding Leslie. You could see how it was all going to look one day—cord carpets, white cubbyholes.

"It's certainly a pleasure to meet you, sir. I'm really looking forward to reading your novel."

"I was just telling Richard," said Leslie, "how John Two Moons got his name."

"I love this story."

In appearance, Frances Ort suggested a rainbow coalition of the chromosomes. She could probably go anywhere in the five boroughs—Harlem, Astoria, Chinatown—and provoke no comment other than the usual incitements to immediate and rigorous sexual congress. In this she resembled her colleague. Ethnically, Evry and Ort were either everything and nothing or neither one thing nor the other. They were just Americans.

"Well. You know how Native Americans get their names."

"I think so. It's the first thing the dad sees."

"Right. Now. The night John Two Moons was born there was this beautiful full moon, and his father—"

"Was drunk," suggested Richard.

"Excuse me?"

"Was drunk. And saw double . . . Well, they are meant to be incredible drunks, aren't they? Native Americans? I mean, we're bad enough, but they . . ."

"And—and his father walked out, by the lake, and saw the full moon reflected in the water."

"That's it?"

"Frances here has been working in Miami with Shanana Ormolu Davis," said Leslie, standing, and taking up position at her side.

"How did she get *her* name? I beg your pardon. Go on."

"Updating sign language for the hearing-impaired. It's really interesting."

"African, or Afro-American," said Frances, "used to be this." She flattened her nose with her palm. "And Chinese used to be this." She tweaked her left eye slantwise with a childish fingertip. "And 'tight' or 'cheap' used to be this." She stroked her chin.

"Meaning?"

"Jewish. With a beard."

"Christ. I can see that needed some work."

"And a person of same-sex orientation," said Leslie, "used to be—"

"Queer," said Frances.

"Excuse me?"

"Queer. They're called queers now."

"Right. Queer," Leslie went on, "used to be this." He gave a languid flap of the wrist. "Can you believe?"

"And now what is it?"

"Queer?" said Leslie, turning to Frances. "What's 'queer' now?"

"Queer? I think it's just sign language for *queer*."

"We've come a long way," said Richard.

"Too right," said Frances.

"Too right," said Leslie.

He took her hand. Or she took his. Or their hands joined. In a way nothing was expressed by this, no claim of love or friendship or even solidarity. But it still looked like sign language.

Frances said goodbye, and very soon Richard was being guided toward the stairs by Leslie, who was saying, "As hard as we're working here, you can see we still have a way to go. Copies have been submitted for review. At the present time, distribution is light going on minimal, but if the reviews are perceived as positive then things may build from there. Can I ask you something? Are you just touring the States *anyway*?"

Now Richard paused on the stairs. He saw no way out. "I'm writing a piece about Gwyn Barry."

"Isn't it amazing the attention he's getting?"

"Yes. Consternating. How do you account for it?"

"I guess it's a book whose time has come. Supernova."

They moved on.

"I'm sorry we can't get out there more for 'Untitled,' " said Leslie. "But yet. If you choose to do so . . ."

At the front door, Leslie veered off to the left, into a storeroom or junk room. There were sounds of mauling and tugging and dragging and his sudden and surprising "Shit!" and then more dragging, until he finally flung a lumpy brown mail sack out into the passage at Richard's feet and came staggering on in after it.

"You're doing readings, signings," said Leslie. He looked vivid—warmed up. "I don't know. You could care less, right? I don't know. There's eighteen copies in there. You feeling strong?"

What could he do? "Untitled" was his youngest, and probably his last-born. The sack looked ragged, frayed, at the end of its tether. But Richard swung it up onto his shoulder. And he had to make it clear to Evry that he could lift it: that he was man enough.

"Boston. That your first stop?"

"Last stop."

"Oh. By the way. Great book."

It wasn't until now that Richard teetered, all his weight gathering on his back foot. "Thank you," he said in a youthful voice. "That's very kind of you. I did feel I was on to something. You don't think . . . I was worried about the penultimate bridging passages. You know: where the phantom narrator pretends to attempt that series of decoy refocussings."

Leslie nodded understandingly.

"Because the travesty is a counterfeit."

"Yup."

"Not that he's really a narrator."

"Mm-hmm."

"Reliable or otherwise. But he had to be a surrogate if the sham refocussings were going to *seem* to work."

"Absolutely. Hey, are you sure you can handle that?"

Out on Ninth and B, between Bold Agenda and the Life Café, a little bookshop (the Lazy Susan) lurked, in a half-basement, behind thick light-bending glass. Unlike most American bookshops, unlike the bookshops he had already meandered between on Fifth and on Madison (monitoring his own absence and turning "Amelior Regained" to the wall or inhuming it beneath stacks of contending trex), and unlike the bookshops he would come to know—the Muzaked and mallish, the underlit and wood-panelled and pseudo-Bodleian, the disco-Montparnassian—this was Richard's kind of bookshop. It looked like a garage sale thrown by the dependents of some bibliomaniacal niggard. He bumped about with his mail sack, finding categories, alphabetization: crystals, heavenly configurations, numerology, and, here and there, yes, poetry, fiction, criticism, philosophy. Then he saw it, on a bench, the slow staggered stacks and the sign saying "Bold Agenda." The mail sack thudded into his spine as he quickly approached and quickly halted. "Hush Now," by Shanana Ormolu Davis, "Cowboy Boots," by John Two Moons, and, among other works by other seekers and dreamers of the Bold Agenda imprint, a brace of copies of "Untitled," by Richard Tull.

He tarried in the Lazy Susan for over an hour. No one bought "Untitled"; no one flipped through it or weighed it in his hand; no one strayed that close to the bench enshrined to Bold Agenda—all of whose publications, it turned out, bore the same strange nimbus of fur and fuzz, as daunting to the eye as to the touch. It was certainly a pity about the look of it, the look and feel of "Untitled." No dust jacket, for instance; and that horsehair texture . . . Richard tarried for over an hour. And no one touched "Untitled." But he paid this no mind. What was an hour? Literary time wasn't cosmic time or geological time or evolutionary time. Still, it wasn't quotidian time. It went slower than the clock on the wall.

Which Gwyn Barry would do well to learn, thought Richard, when he got back to the hotel. Shackled and hostaged to the secular, to the temporal, an eager hireling of his own novel, Gwyn was still stockpiling interviews in his suite on the fourteenth floor. Richard watched and listened to three or four of them (simplicity, unsophistication, carpentry), quietly mesmerized by boredom and disgust. Why did he want a great deal of alcohol so much (why did he want to upend the drinks table into his mouth?), and why did he throb for Gina's touch? Waking beside her, on some recent mornings, he had felt as questingly nubile as the opening bars of "Peter and the Wolf.". . . Richard and Gwyn were flying out in the late afternoon. Somehow Richard found time to cab downtown to Avenue B, to reënter the Lazy Susan and establish that neither copy of "Untitled" had left the bookstore. On the other hand, perhaps one had been sold and his modest pile had been fondly replenished from the stockroom. Perhaps one copy had been sold. Perhaps, somewhere, a reader was frowning and smiling and scratching

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his hair. Perhaps one copy had been sold. Perhaps two.

SIXTEEN days and six cities later, Boston was burning behind them in its brick-red dusk as they walked out of the gate and headed for the plane—the light aircraft. Richard turned. The rust and dust of the Logan evening contained something lurid, something brothelly and lewd. And you could hear the primal moan over and above the ordinary wind.

Gwyn said, "Reassure me."

"It's a hop," said the publicity boy. "Like a half hour. We'll beat the storm. They guarantee we'll beat it."

"We're not going up in *that.* Jesus. It's the Wright brothers."

"Orville and Wilbur," said Richard, ramblingly, through his double toothache. He had two joke toothaches. He looked like a television. He looked like Bart Simpson. "The Kitty Hawk."

"I've done it like a thousand times. It's a breeze."

"It's not a breeze. It's a hurricane."

"Don't worry about it."

Richard unyoked his mail sack from his shoulder and lowered it to the ground. His mail sack was fractionally heavier than it had been before the Boston signing session. As if to prove and memorialize this fact, as if to give it chapter and verse, his mail sack was now going to be *weighed.* Weight, hereabouts, was much in the air. All the passengers, at check-in, were asked what their weight was, Gwyn disclosing a game hundred and thirty-five, Richard an over-particular and outdated hundred and seventy-five, the publicity boy eventually coming up with a regrettable two hundred and ten. Tensing her legs, a young woman in a blue pants suit now hoisted Richard's mail sack onto the broad bucket of the platform scale. If his suitcase had raised eyebrows, his mail sack was the theme of candid debate. To get them through this debate, Richard had to smile. And if it hurts when you smile, you realize how often you smile when you don't want to—how often your smiles are smiles of pain. He knew from mirrors how his smiles made him look. They made him look as if he was recovering from a stroke. So these smiles, performed on behalf of his mail sack, in front of Gwyn, in front of the publicity boy, took from him everything he had. They took the change from his pockets. These smiles just cleaned him out. . . . A couple of hundred feet away the light aircraft crouched self-consciously in its bay, spindly-legged but plump-girdled, and eloquent of aerodynamic ingenuousness. Looking at it, Richard thought not of the goggled smiles of Orville and Wilbur but of the spastic wrigglings of mustachioed hobbyists—riding off cliffs on buttressed bicycles and flapping their pantomime wings. His mail sack was skeptically returned to him, as hand baggage. He shouldered it once more, and turned to Gwyn.

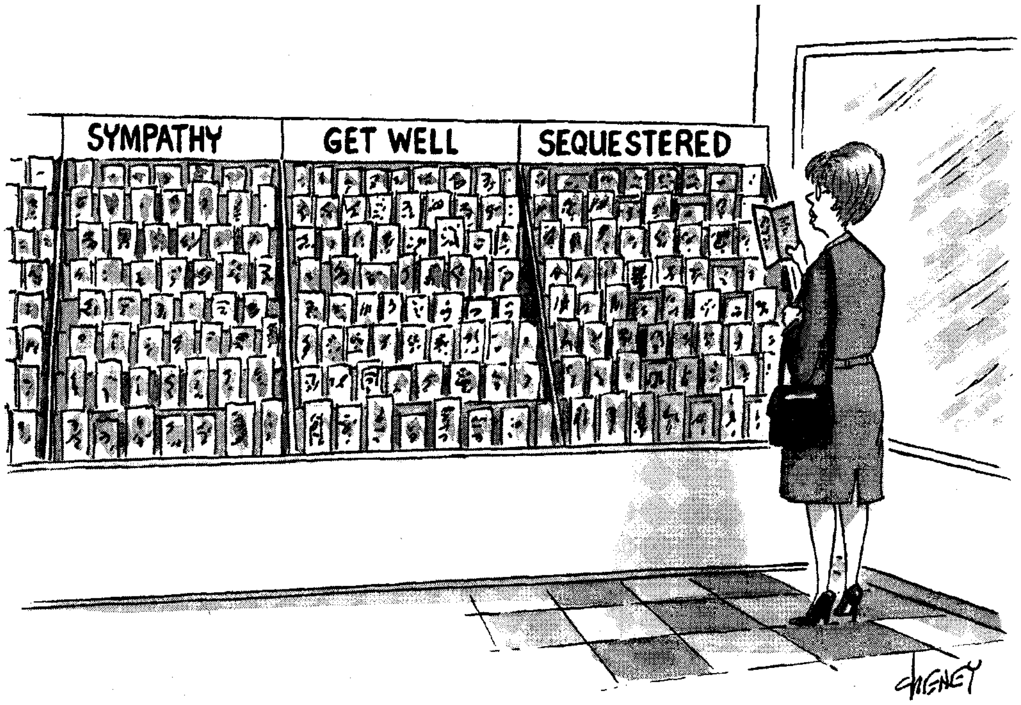
"Christ. Will you look at that."

"Where?" said Richard, and looked to the south.

Night was ready to arrive, to roll over, but the day was not accepting this. Light and day hadn't gone to bed. They were up after dark. In the core of the advancing darkness, light—talent, passion—feverishly struggled and would then rear up madly bright: hysterical day.

He wasn't worried, because he was already dead. It was over. It was the signing that had killed him. Keats was killed by a review. Richard was killed by a signing. Of the *reading* you could at least say that there weren't many people there to see it. But his audience for the signing was biblically vast. Submitting to demand, Gwyn had given a shortened reading—in three sittings. And everyone stuck around.

So while his friend and rival exhausted four whole ballpoints, signing "Amelior Regained," "Amelior," "Summertown," signing programs, flyers, press photographs, signing autograph books, plaster casts, girls' forearms, girls' inner thighs, Richard sat at the other table for two hours doing nothing. In the past, and in various capacities, none of them exalted, he had hung around at fairs and festivals and studied, with casual enmity, the signing queues of writers. Each queue, like each book and each writer, had a genre it belonged to. The countercultural, the contentedly pedagogic, the straggly, the ramrod orderly, the playful, the earnest, as well as all the other emphases of class, age, sex, and race. And Gwyn's queue, it had to be admitted, looked like the universal. Here they came, stepping up the gangway to the ark of the future.



THEY rolled forward, soon to go. The seven passengers sat with their necks bent almost sideways, in postures of tortured compression. It wasn't just the low ceiling: it was also the embarrassing proximity of the tarmac, only a few feet beneath the soles of their shoes. Richard assumed that the engine was so loud that it was off the human scale altogether, and all you felt was vibration, in your every atom. More or less engulfed by his mail sack, he sat jammed into the rearmost row, next to Gwyn. They were both assessing the pilot—a figure of unusually enhanced interest: tall, fleshy, ginger-blond, a big man with a light step, he deployed a feminine delicacy in the arrangement of his peaked cap, his flight box, his earphones. Turning sideways in his seat, comfortingly perfunctory, he had run through the safety instructions in a voice perhaps incapable of modulation anyway, and then attended to his controls, the sort of dashboards appropriate to a prewar spaceship or a glue-and-balsam nuclear sub: dials, graphs, metal switches coated in worn paint. Richard realized that the dash contained no plastic. Was that good, he wondered, and tried to lose himself in silent tribute to durable and horny-handed craftsmanship and skills, now, alas, long vanished. The pilot wore a white shirt and lumpy cream trousers the texture of flock wallpaper. It was easy, somehow, to lose yourself in the expanse of his cream rump: firmly framed in the lower aperture of his seat, it filled its space solidly and proudly, soft-cornered, like a TV—like Richard's face.

So the little plane queued for takeoff. The little plane was a little plane, among all these big ones, and hoped it wasn't in the way. But it was. The passenger jets, dog-nosed (their noses black and damp in the dew or sweat of the coming storm), waited in line behind them like rigid pointers cocked for the hunt. Ahead of them, round the turn, were the tensed haunches of the important shuttles—to New York, to Washington—waiting to take Americans where they needed to go: around America. Over and above the compound anguish of the checked planes, you could hear the sky and the epic groan of the middle air. Darkness, night, was wheeling in from the north. But from the defiant south came a negligent and unanswerable demonstration of light, the electromagnetic: God's whips, knouts, and sjamboks of solder and copper.

No one spoke. Gwyn suddenly leaned forward and engaged the publicity boy. His inquiries were muffled by the headrests, and when the publicity boy replied he seemed to be talking or shouting to himself, like a bum or a wacko, like American fever. *Come on, you see what's behind us. . . . They do this like nine times a day. . . . No* way *is it a hurricane. It's a storm. . . . You mean like a hurricane with a* name?

"Hurricanes used to be all girls," said Richard. He had spoken, really, to make the publicity boy seem saner. It made *him* seem saner, too, and he continued ramblingly, "Now they alternate them. Girl, boy. Boy, girl. I think that's better, I don't know."

"Listen to this one," said Gwyn. "He's already flipped. Jesus. All this for a *party*."

The pilot put his face into profile and monotonously informed them that it would be a whole lot cooler in here when they were off the ground. This was good news. Because the passengers were finding out what happened to the air on planes and what would happen to the air on jets unless they doctored and gimmicked it. How soon it was exhausted, and went blood-heat and pungent. How soon you were all breathing each other's yawns. Now all the passengers were silent, giving themselves up to that strange modern activity, fancy-priced suffering, in which America leads the world; but when the plane rounded the last corner and found nothing ahead of it except sea and sky, and made its rattling gallop for the bruised yonder, and was up, away, exchanging one medium for a new and better one, and was immediately sent skidding sideways, windmilling its arms, then all eight of them moaned in harmony, answering the moan above their heads.

They steadied, and climbed. Over parking lot, over graveyard, over the harbor, over the bay. Soon the patchy whitecaps were no more than flecks of dandruff on the broad shoulder of the sea. Richard looked casually out of his porthole, to the south. And he couldn't believe it. The storm was there, like a Gothic cathedral, with all its glaring gargoyles. . . .

"That red switch," said Gwyn. "What's he doing with that red switch?"

Next to the digital clock on the dashboard, which recorded their flight time (nine minutes elapsed), there was a red switch and a flashing and beeping red light which did seem to be exercising the pilot in an unencouraging way. He kept twiddling it, as if hoping that the light would go off, or change color, or stop beeping. But his movements were perhaps more curious than agitated. The

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stiff cream carapace of his backside was still stalwartly ensconced in its chair.

"We're losing height. I think we're losing height."

"He'd tell us if something was up," said Richard. "Wouldn't he? Or wouldn't he."

Without turning round the pilot said, "We're having a weight problem. Hopefully it won't be a . . . a problem. It'll keep us under this weather here." And now he did turn round, eying each passenger in turn with reasonable suspicion, as if searching for a superfat stowaway.

"I'm not going to worry," said Gwyn, "until *he* starts to worry."

The pilot didn't seem worried. He had even started to whistle.

"That sounds wise," said Richard, and turned to his porthole. And the sea looked as close as the tarmac had looked ten minutes ago, and the plane suddenly seemed to be travelling not through the air but through the churned water. The dip, the climb, the crest, the fall. The wave, the wait, the wave, the wait.

"Oh man," said Gwyn.

"He's stopped fucking with that red switch."

"Has he?"

"Yeah. At least he's stopped fucking with that red switch."

"Has he? Good."

Above their heads the cabin lights dimmed and flickered and dimmed again.

IT was when the patch of shit appeared on the pilot's cream rump that Richard knew for certain that all was not well. This patch of shit started life as an islet, a Martha's Vineyard that soon became a Cuba, then a Madagascar, then a dreadful Australia of brown. But that was five minutes ago, and no one gave a shit about it now. Not a single passenger, true, had interpreted the state of the pilot's pants as a favorable sign, but that was five minutes ago, that was history, and no one gave a shit about it now, not even the pilot, who was hollering into the microphone, hollering into a world of neighing metal and squawking rivets, hollering into the very language of the storm—its fricatives, its atrocious plosives. The gods had put aside their bullwhips and their elemental rodeo and were now at play with their bowling balls clattering down the gutters of space-time. Within were the mortals, starfished from white knuckle to white toe joint, stretched like Christs, like Joans in her fire. Richard looked and now felt love for the publicity boy, his sleek, shaking, tear-washed face.

This would end. He reached for Gwyn's hand and said, loudly, in his ear, "Death is good."

"What?"

"Death is good." Here in America he had noticed how much less he cared, every time, whether the plane he was in stayed up. There was so much less, every time, to come down to. "Death is good."

"Oh *yeah*?"

Richard felt he had won. Because of his boys—because of Marius and Marco. Gwyn was childless. He had a wife. And Richard had a wife. But who *was* your wife? She was just the one you ended up with who had your kids. And you were just the one she had them with. Childhood was the universal. *Everyone* had been there. Richard said, "I'll survive."

"We'll survive. We'll survive."

No, not you, Richard thought. But he said, "The world liked what you wrote."

"Who fucking cares? No. Thanks. I'm sorry your . . . Gina loves you. She just . . ."

"What? She just what?"

Now came a thousand camera flashes through every porthole. The parting shots of the paparazzi of the storm. With rolling deliberation the sky gathered them into its slingshot, wound and stretched them back ("Death is good," he said again), and fired them out into silent night.

YOU could sense the presence of the peninsula and see the lights of the airport. Some lights were fixed. Others moved.

"Avoidance apron," sobbed the pilot into his mike. "Avoidance apron . . ."

The passengers unwrapped their voices and sank back, harshly purring. Richard offered his handkerchief to the publicity boy, who accepted it.

"*Avoidance* apron. *Avoidance* apron!"

"What's he mean?" said Gwyn, jerking around in his seat. "What's the avoidance apron? Where you crash-land? Is the landing gear down? Is it gone?"

It didn't seem to matter, and no one else seemed to care. They were getting nearer to their own thing, the ground, the earth.

Provincetown was a baby airport, meant for baby planes, and it was shy about the fuss. With his case and his mail sack, Richard had plonked himself down on a patch of grass—over on the civilian side of the airport's main bungalow. He patiently chain-smoked, and from a plastic bottle with a plastic tube patiently drank the brandy given to him by a sympathetic medic. On the airfield a scene of human and mechanical confusion was approaching its completion and dispersal point. There was a handsome fire engine, and two blue-cross station wagons on the lookout for custom (into one of which an elderly passenger had been levered, clutching his pacemaker), and a couple of cops creaking about. . . . The pilot had left the plane last, attended by ground staff. He was wearing a shiny black mid-length skirt or pinafore. Two other passengers, slumped on chairs in the airport building, attempted to give him a cheer; but he shuffled on through with extreme diffidence. Gwyn was in there now, with the publicity boy and a gesticulating young journalist from the *Cape Codder*.

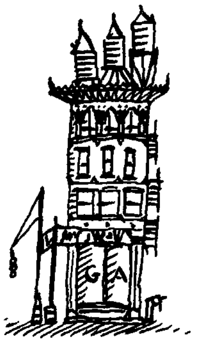
He closed his eyes for a while. Someone took the cigarette from between his fingers and drew on it with audible hunger. He looked up: it occurred to him that they were both in a state that had a medical designation, because Gwyn resembled no one he had ever seen before. And maybe *he* didn't look that hot or that cool, sitting with his shoulders shaking on the frosted grass, and steam coming up all round him—animal vapors. But he laughed his tight laugh and said, not ramblingly anymore, "I worked it out. You know the pilot? We thought he was shouting *avoidance* apron. But he wasn't. I heard one of the ladies here. He wanted a—*voidance* apron. She called it a 'shit wrap.' " Richard laughed stealthily, under the cover of his shaking shoulders. He did think it was kind of great. You wouldn't want to radio ahead for a shit wrap. That would offend the passengers. So you radio ahead for a voidance apron. And the passengers can remain unoffended as they prepare to crash-land or mass-eject onto the airport latrine. "A voidance apron," he said. "It's kind of great, I think. You were saying? About Gina?"

Gwyn stood over him.

"She loves me?"

"Despite everything. Which is saying

something. Oh, you know. Despite you being a failed book reviewer who comes on like Dr. Johnson, I can see why *you* think death is good. Because then you and I are the same. But I'm alive. And I'm going to go on doing what every man would do if he thought he could get away with it. Everything's changed." Gwyn knelt, his hands folded on his thigh, as if for a knighthood. "Let me tell you the interesting thing about the star system. It works. You want to know what silicone feels like? It feels good. It feels better. Because of what it says. Whither fellatio? you ask. Well that's changed, too. I'll tell you whither. I can sum it up for you in one word. It's *noisier*." He straightened up again. With a sudden apprehension of disgust he flicked the cigarette away and said, "You know what bloody near killed us up there? Killed you, killed me?" Now he stepped forward and gave the mail sack a careless kick—and Richard was holding it close, like a boxing coach with a punching bag, feeling the force of the contender's right. "Your lousy book."



The publicity boy came out of the building with his mobile phone and told them that they had three choices. They could go straight to the hotel and rest up. Or they could go to P-town General or wherever for checkups and the usual post-trauma bullshit. Or they could go to the party.

They went to the party.

THE first bar Richard hit back in New York was selling vodka-and-milk to old black men for a dollar twenty-five. By the time he reached Central Park South, he had driven this up to ten bucks a pop, and came out of the Plaza, where they wouldn't serve him, in some disarray. As he staggered about, among shoe polish and fountain spray, a phalanx of civilians streamed past him in distinct amateur-military style, and on their faces—well, he took his last look at it: American resolve. Their mission was simple. They intended to embarrass the horse-and-carriage trade of Central Park South. Across the road they surged, raising their daubed placards, all of which had something pithy or rhyming to say about the incompatibility of beast and city: how the two didn't mix. The horsemen, slaves of tourists, dressed in low-caste colors (and there was a horsewoman, too, not that old but her face grimily lined, wearing what looked like an entire tepee over a body as thin as a ridgepole): the horsepeople watched their advancing adversaries with a loathing that lay at the limit of human fatigue. Swept along, Richard now disengaged himself and pushed his way toward the railings. A horse halted his progress—a horse and its sightless stare. The animal, the blinkered clip-clop, cause of all the fuss, raised its head in pompous indifference, and then dropped it again, wholly preoccupied, it seemed, by the task of wiping shit from its shoe (not dog shit but horse shit—in a class of its own, really, as shit went), and doing this not as humans do it, heel first and backward, but as horses do it, toe first and forward. So the charioteers in the ethnic heft of their patchwork and motley, in their gypsy jackets, averted their gypsy chancer's eyes, and the horse scraped its shoe, not minding. Agony, of which there was much in the air, found expression only through the cars: the delivery vans, the Plaza limousines, the yellow cabs. Deliberately obstructed for now, until the police showed up and cleared the scene, the beasts of burden, made of metal and serving the concrete city, twisted and shuddered, blaring blue murder with smoke coming out of their ears. Beyond, exhaustively deconsecrated, lay the enchanted glade of Central Park.

Making his last move, he sideswiped his way east, across Fifth and Madison, on to the avenue of sun and gold. To the north, the prospect was seized in the city's grid, locked and channelled by the buildings on either side and their stiff-chested measure. The vista looked infinite, and entirely unknown, like the open sea to the first traversers of the Atlantic (when gods and terrors were still young and strong), ever ready to become the end of the world, where water became waterfall, oceanfall. Richard realized that he would have to stop saying he had never been to America. To that distinction—his main accomplishment and claim to fame—he could no longer pretend. He had been to America.

He had been to America. ♦

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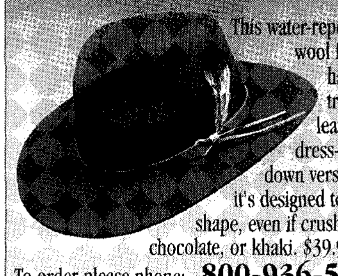

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## BOOKS

# THE READER IN EXILE

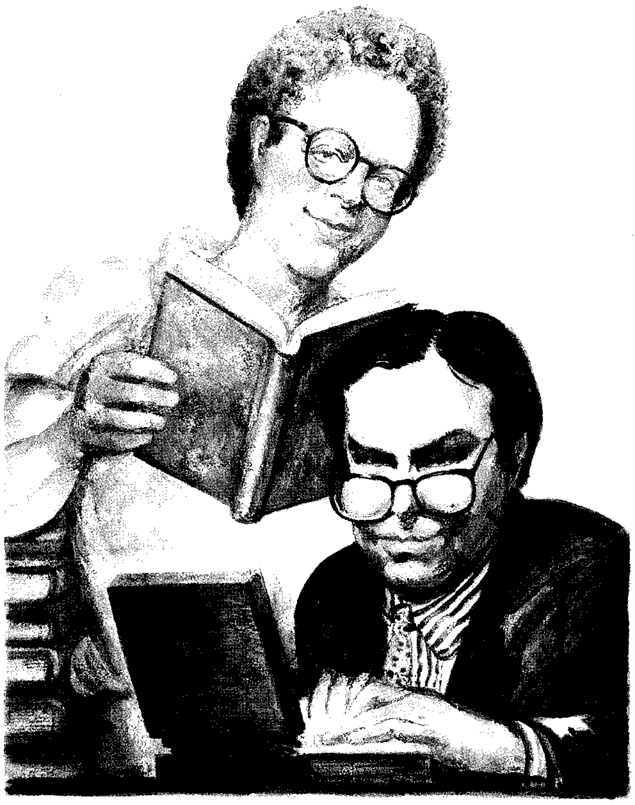
*The written word versus the digital revolution.*

BY JONATHAN FRANZEN

A FEW months ago, I gave away my television set. It was a massive old Sony Trinitron, the gift of a friend whose girlfriend couldn't stand the penetrating whistle that the picture tube produced. Its wood-look veneer recalled an era when TV sets were trying, however feebly, to pass as furniture—an era when their designers could still imagine them in a state of not being turned on. I kept it in inaccessible places, like the floor of a closet, and I could get a good picture only by sitting cross-legged directly in front of it and keeping the length of copper wire that served as an antenna in contact with my skin. It's hard to make TV viewing more unpleasant than I did. Still, I felt that the Trinitron had to go, because as long as it was in the house, reachable by some combination of extension cords, I wasn't reading books.

I was born in 1959, on the cusp of a great generational divide, and for me it's a toss-up which is scarier: living without electronic access to my country's culture or trying to survive in that culture without the self-definition I get from regular immersion in literature. I understand my life in the context of Raskolnikov and Quentin Compson, not David Letterman or Jerry Seinfeld. But the life I understand by way of books feels increasingly lonely. It has little to do with the mediascape that constitutes so many other people's present.

For every reader who dies today, a viewer is born, and we seem to be witnessing, here in the anxious mid-nineties, the final tipping of the balance. Even now, though, most popular debate confines itself to the content displayed on the small screen. Too much sex and violence? Too many toy commercials? A vast wasteland? Entertaining ourselves to death? The questions slight the way that television transforms our species' sensory input. For critics inclined to alarmism, the shift from a culture based on the printed word to a culture based on virtual images—a shift that began with television and is now being completed with computers—feels apocalyptic. In much the same way that Silicon Valley dreams of the "killer application" that will make P.C.s indispensable to every American, alarmists seek a killer argument that will make the imminence of apocalypse self-evident.



*While Sven Birkerts seeks salvation in the novel, Nicholas Negroponte puts his trust in technology.*

One recent attempt at such an argument is a book called "A Is for Ox," by the literary scholar Barry Sanders, who takes as his starting point two dismal trends: rising violence among youth and falling verbal test scores. In answer to the well-documented fact that children don't read and write the way they used to, Sanders refreshingly declines to give the explanation that Barney has murdered Mother Goose. TV still plays the villain in his cosmology, but it works its evil less by displacing reading than by replacing verbal interaction with parents and peers. No matter how high the quality of the programming, an excess of passive reception stunts a child's oral development and prepares her or him to be frustrated by the seemingly arbitrary rules of standard English. Computers and video in the classroom only compound the estrangement from spoken language. Frustration turns to resentment: kids drop out of school and, in the worst case, join violent gangs of what Sanders calls "post-illiterates." It's his thesis that without a literacy rooted in orality there can be neither a self, as we understand it, nor self-consciousness. Interpreting the past, entertaining choices in the present, projecting a future, experiencing guilt or remorse—these are all, according to Sanders, activities foreclosed to the soulless young gangsters of today and to the fully computerized society, neither oral nor literate, of tomorrow.

The problem with Sanders's argument, as a killer, is that he has to finger too many culprits. He lays the blame for the national crisis in literacy as much on the decline in the quality time that parents spend with their children as on the video input that has filled the vacuum. Young gangsters, he notes, not only are addicted to images but also come from impoverished, unstable homes. So are we facing a techno-apocalypse, or is it plain, old-fashioned social dysfunction? Every mother I know restricts her children's TV intake, and sows resistance to it by encouraging reading. Like the readers of this magazine, my friends and I belong to an élite—to that class of well-educated "symbolic analysts" which Labor Secretary Robert Reich believes is inheriting the earth. Sanders's generalizations about "young people today" apply only to the segment of the population (admittedly a large one) that lacks the money or the leisure to inoculate its children against the worst ravages of the electronic media. What he describes as the self-immolation of civilization is in fact only a partitioning; and the irony of this partitioning is that those with the greatest access to information are the ones least tethered by the wires that bring it.

ANYONE with a taste for such ironies will enjoy Nicholas Negroponte's "Being Digital" (Knopf; $23), a guide to Tomorrowland for those who believe that technology has created no problems that better technology can't fix. Negroponte is the director of the Media Lab at M.I.T., and "Being Digital" is a compilation of his monthly columns in *Wired* magazine, the graphically adventurous "bible" (as I've seen it called) of the cyberworld. *Wired* attempts to celebrate the in-ness of the in crowd while leaving the door open for newcomers, and it manages the trick by selling both vision and inside dope. Negroponte's specialty is vision. He's the in-house oracle.

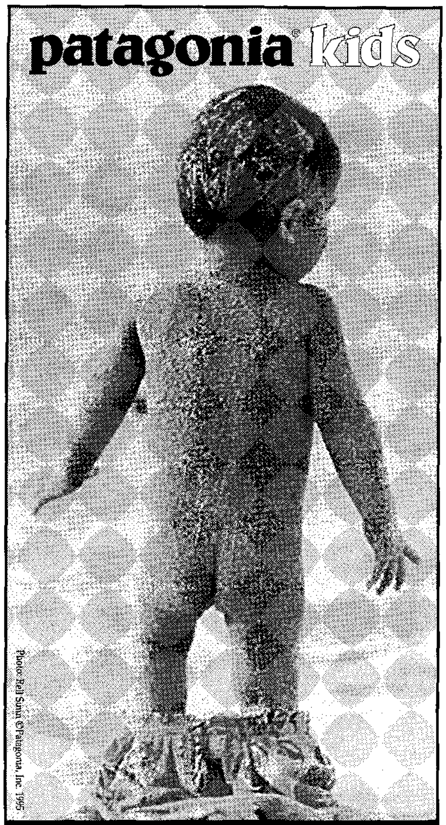
Leaders of government and industry flock to Negroponte for advice, and, as a consequence, much of "Being Digital" is about (how else to put it?) resource allocation. Should developers of virtual-reality equipment spend their finite computing power on heightening video resolution or on improving the equipment's reaction time to a user's head and neck movements? Go with the speed, says Negroponte. Should Wall Street invest in high-volume electronic pipelines or in TV technology that uses existing pipelines more efficiently? Go with the smart machine, says Negroponte.

Perhaps because the title "Being Digital" seems to promise the articulation of a new way of being human, it takes a while to realize that the book is not in fact about the transformation of a culture but about money. The first question Negroponte asks of a development like virtual reality is whether there's a market for it. If a market exists, someone will inevitably exploit it, and so it's pointless to ask "Do we need this?" or "How might it harm us?" The "consumer" is a cheerful omnipresence in Negroponte's book, a most favored arbiter.

"Being Digital" is awash in references to a world of moneyed internationalism—to the luxury hotels that its author stays in, to his lunches with Prime Ministers, to transpacific flights, Burgundian vintners, Swiss boarding schools, Bavarian nannies. The ease with which jobs and capital and digital signals now cross national boundaries is matched by the mobility of the new informational élite—those lucky symbolic analysts, who, like many a ruling class before them, are finding that they have more in common with the elect of other countries than with the preterite of their own. It's a revelation, when you notice it, how free of nationalism "Being Digital" is, how interchangeable the locales. In a brief aside, Negroponte complains that people lecture him about life in the real world—"as if," he says, "I live in an unreal world." He's right to complain. His world is as real as the ganglands that Barry Sanders evokes. But the two worlds are growing ever more unreal to each other.

High above the clouds, the sun always shines. Negroponte paints a tomorrow of talking toasters, smart refrigerators, and flavorized computers ("You will be able to buy a Larry King personality for your newspaper interface") that is "Jetsons"-like in its retention of today's suburban values. To find clues to a deeper transformation, you have to read between the lines. Negroponte has a habit of reducing human functions to machinery: the human eye is "the client for the image," an ear is a "channel," faces are "display devices," and "Disney's guaranteed audience is refueled at a rate that exceeds 12,500 births each hour." In the future, "CD-ROMs may be edible, and parallel processors may be applied like sun tan lotion." The new, digital human being will dine not only on storage devices but on narcissism: newspapers might be printed "in an edition of one. . . . Call it *The Daily Me.*" Authors, meanwhile, as they move from text to multimedia, will assume the role of "stage-set or theme-park designer."

When Barry Sanders looks at young people, he sees lost, affectless faces. Negroponte sees a "mathematically able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and more visually literate" generation happily competing in a cyberspace where "the pursuit of intellectual achievement will not be tilted so much in favor of the bookworm." He espouses a kind of therapeutic corporatism, defending electronic games as teachers of "strategies" and "planning skills," and recalls how his son had trouble learning to add and subtract until his teacher put dollar signs in front of the figures. The closest that Negroponte comes to responding to the existence of social dysfunction is in his description of the robots that in the near future will bring us our drinks and dust our empty bookshelves: "For security reasons, a household robot must also be able to bark like a ferocious dog."

IT'S easy to fault Negroponte's resolute ahistoricism; harder, however, to dislike an author who begins his book by confessing, "Being dyslexic, I don't like to read." Negroponte is nothing more and nothing less than a man who has profited by speculating on the future and is willing, like a successful stockbroker, to share his secrets. Apart from offering a few misty assurances—"Digital technology can be a natural force drawing people into greater world harmony"—he doesn't pretend that his revolution will solve problems more serious than the annoyance of having to visit Blockbuster in the flesh to rent a movie.

In a culture of false perspective, where Robert Shapiro can appear taller than Boris Yeltsin, it's difficult to tell if the information highway is legitimately big news. Russell Baker has compared the hyping of the highway to the hyping of atomic energy in the fifties, when industry pitchmen promised that we would soon be paying "pennies" for our monthly utilities. Today's technology boosters can't offer ordinary consumers as measurable a benefit as cheap electricity. Instead, the selling points are intangible—conveyed through the language of health and hipness.

Digital technology, the argument goes, is good medicine for an ailing society. TV has given us government by image; interactivity will return power to the people. TV has produced millions of uneducable children; computers will teach them. Top-down programming has isolated us; bottom-up networks will reunite us. As a bonus, being digital is medicine that tastes good—it's a pop-cultural pleasure we're invited to indulge. Indeed, some of the best television these days is funded by I.B.M.: nuns in a Czech convent whisper about the Net; Moroccan businessmen sip mint tea and talk interfacing. This is both advertising and luscious postmodern art. Of course, the aim of such art is simply to make the giving of our dollars to I.B.M. seem inevitable. But popularity has become its own justification.

If I were fashioning my own killer argument against the digital revolution, I'd begin with the observation that both Newt Gingrich and Timothy Leary are crazy about it. Somewhere, something isn't adding up. Douglas Rushkoff, in "Media Virus!"—his book-length exploration of the media counterculture—quotes a skeptical New Age thinker as offering this bright side to the revolution: "There's no longer a private space. The idea of literate culture is basically a middle-class notion—it's the gentleman in his book-lined study with the privacy for reflection. That's a very élitist notion." Robert Coover, writing in a similar vein in a pair of essays for the *Times Book Review*, promises that hypertext will replace "the predetermined one-way route" of the conventional novel with works that can be read in any number of ways, and thus liberate readers from "domination by the author." At the same time, Speaker Gingrich's own clutch of New Age authors advertise the electronic town meeting as the perfect antidote to tired Second Wave liberalism. Where Wall Street sees a profit, visionaries of every political persuasion see empowerment for the masses.

That news of this better future continues to arrive by way of print—in "the entombing, distancing oppression of paper," as a *Wired* columnist put it—may be simply a paradox of obsolescence, like the necessity of riding your horse to the dealer who sells you your first car. But Negroponte, in explaining his decision to publish an actual book, offers a surprising reason for his choice: interactive multimedia leave too little to the imagination. "By contrast," he says, "the written word sparks images and evokes metaphors that get much of their meaning from the reader's imagination and experiences. When you read a novel, much of the color, sound, and motion come from you."

If Negroponte took the health of the

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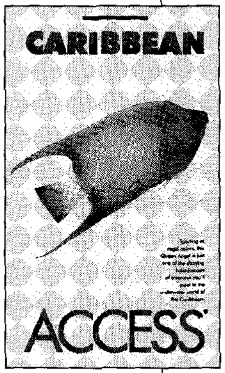

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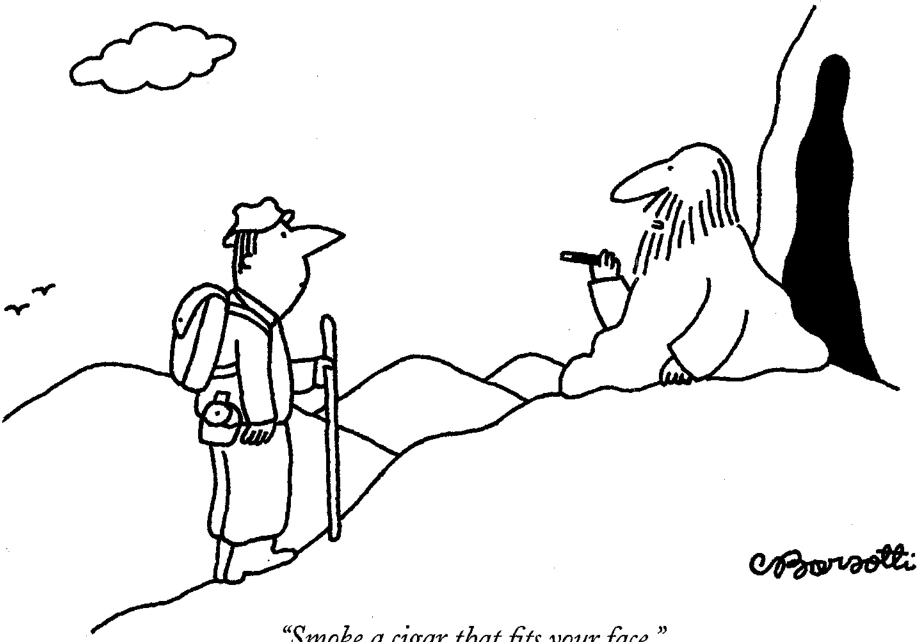

*"Smoke a cigar that fits your face."*

• •

body politic seriously, he would need to explore what this argument implies about the muscle tone of our imaginations in a fully digital age. But you can trust him, and the hard-core corporate interests he advises, not to engage in sentimentality. The truth is simple, if unpretty: the novel is dying because the consumer doesn't want it anymore.

NOVELS are by no means dead, of course—just ask Amy Tan or Jane Smiley. But the Novel, as a seat of cultural authority, is teetering on the brink, and in "The Gutenberg Elegies" (Faber & Faber; $22.95), a collection of essays subtitled "The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age," Sven Birkerts registers his surprise and dismay that its decline has not been more widely mourned. Not even professional book critics, who ought to be the front line of the novel's defenders, have raised the alarm, and Birkerts, who is a critic himself, sounds like a loyal soldier deserted by his regiment. The tone of his elegies is brave but plaintive.

Birkerts begins his defense of the novel by recounting how, while growing up in an immigrant household, he came to understand himself by reading Jack Kerouac, J. D. Salinger, Hermann Hesse, and the like. The authors as well as the alienated, romantic heroes of their books became Birkerts' models for emulation and comparison. Later, on the desolate emotional beach on which the wave of sixties idealism seems to have deposited so many people, Birkerts weathered years of depression by reading, by working in bookstores, and, finally, by becoming a reviewer. "Basically," he says, "I was rescued by books."

Books as catalysts of self-realization and books as sanctuary: the notions are paired because Birkerts believes that "inwardness, the more reflective component of self," requires a "space" where a person can reflect on the meaning of things. Compared with the state of a person watching a movie or clicking through hypertext, he says, absorption in a novel is closer to a state of meditation, and he is at his best in tracing the subtleties of this state. Here is his description of his initial engagement with a novel: "I feel a tug. The chain has settled over the sprockets; there is the feel of meshing, then the forward glide." And here is his neat reply to hypertext's promise of liberation from the author: "This 'domination by the author' has been, at least until now, the *point* of reading and writing. The author masters the resources of language to create a vision that will engage and in some way overpower the reader; the reader goes to the work to be subjected to the creative will of another." Birkerts on reading fiction is like M. F. K. Fisher on eating or Norman Maclean on fly casting. He makes you want to go do it.

Counterposed to his idyll of the book-lined study, however, is a raging alarmism. In the decline of the novel Birkerts sees more than a shift in our habits of entertainment. He sees a transformation of the very nature of humanity. His nightmare, to be sure, "is not one of neotroglodytes grunting and wielding clubs, but of efficient and prosperous information managers living in the shallows of what it means to be human and not knowing the difference." He grants that technology has made our perspectives more global and tolerant, our access to information easier, our self-definitions less confining. But, as he repeatedly stresses, "the more complex and sophisticated our systems of lateral access, the more we sacrifice in the way of depth." Instead of Augie March, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Instead of the Manassas battlefield, a historical theme park. Instead of organizing narratives, a map of the world as complex as the world itself. Instead of a soul, membership in a crowd. Instead of wisdom, data.

IN a coda to "The Gutenberg Elegies" Birkerts conjures up, out of the pages of *Wired*, the Devil himself, "sleek and confident," a "sorcerer of the binary order," who offers to replace the struggle of earthly existence with "a vivid, pleasant dream." All he wants in return is mankind's soul. Birkerts confesses to envy of the Devil: "I wonder, as I did in high school when confronted with the smooth and athletic ones, the team captains and class presidents, whether I would not, deep down, trade in all this doubting and wondering and just be him." Yet, tempted though he is by the sexiness of the Devil's technology, a "voice" in his heart says, "Refuse it."

Technology as the Devil incarnate, being digital as perdition: given that contemporary authors like Toni Morrison have vastly larger audiences than Jane Austen had in her day, something other than sober analysis seems to be motivating Birkerts's hyperbole. The clue, I think, is in the glimpses he gives of his own life beneath the shallows of what it means to be human. He refers to his smoking, his quarts of beer, his morbid premonitions of disaster, his insomnia, his brooding. He names as the primary audience for his book his many friends who refuse to grant him the darkness of our cultural moment, who shrug off electronic developments as enhancements of the written word. "I sometimes wonder if my thoughtful friends and I are living in the same world. . . . Naturally I prefer to think that the problem lies with them."

These lines are redolent with depression and the sense of estrangement from humanity which depression fosters. Nothing aggravates this estrangement more than a juggernaut of hipness such as television has created and the digital revolution's marketers are exploiting. It's no accident that Birkerts locates apocalypse in the arch-hip pages of *Wired.* He's still the high-school loner, excluded from the in crowd and driven, therefore, to the alternative and more "genuine" satisfactions of reading. But what, we might ask him, is so wrong with being an efficient and prosperous information manager? Do the team captains and class presidents really not have souls?

Élitism is the Achilles' heel of every serious defense of art—an invitation to the poisoned arrows of populist rhetoric from the right. The élitism of modern literature is, undeniably, a peculiar one—an aristocracy of alienation, a fraternity of the doubting and wondering. Still, after voicing a suspicion that nonreaders view reading "as a kind of value judgment upon themselves, as an élitist and exclusionary act," Birkerts is brave enough to confirm their worst fears: "Reading *is* a judgment. It brands as insufficient the understandings and priorities that govern ordinary life." If he had stopped here, with the hard fact of literature's selective appeal, "The Gutenberg Elegies" would be an unassailable, if unheeded, paean. But because books saved his life and he can't abide the thought of a world without them, he falls under the spell of another, more popular defense of art. This is the grant-proposal defense, the defense that avoids élitism. Crudely put, it's that while technology is merely palliative, art is therapeutic.

I admit to being swayable by this argument. It's why I banished my Trinitron and gave myself back to books. But I try to keep this to myself. Unhappy families may be aesthetically superior to happy families, whose happiness is all alike, but "dysfunctional" families are not. It was easy to defend a novel about unhappiness; everybody knows unhappiness; it's part of the human condition. A novel about emotional dysfunction, however, is reduced to a Manichaeanism of utility. Either it's a sinister enabler, obstructing health by celebrating pathology, or it's an object lesson, helping the reader to understand and overcome his own dysfunction. Obsession with social health produces a similar vulgarity: if a novel isn't part of a political solution, it must be part of the problem. The doctoral candidate who "exposes" Joseph Conrad as a racist is akin to the school board that exiles Holden Caulfield as a poor role model—akin as well, unfortunately, to Birkerts, whose urgency in defending reading devolves from the assumption that books must somehow "serve" us.

I love novels as much as Birkerts does, and I, too, have felt rescued by them. I'm moved by his pleading, as a lobbyist in the cause of literature, for the intellectual subsidy of his client. But novelists want their work to be enjoyed, not taken as medicine. Blaming infernal technologies and treasonous literary critics, as Birkerts does, will not undo the damage. Neither will the argument that reading enriches us. Ultimately, if novelists want their work to be read, the responsibility for making it attractive and imperative is solely their own.

THERE remains, however, the bitter circumstance that, as Birkerts puts it, "the daily life of the average American has become Teflon for the novelist." Once upon a time, characters inhabited charged fields of status and geography. Now, increasingly, the world is binary. Either you have or you don't have. You're functional or you're dysfunctional, you're wired or you're tired. Unhappy families, perhaps even more than happy ones, are identically patched in to CNN, "The Lion King," and America Online. It's more than a matter of cultural references; it's the very texture of their lives. And if a novel depends on the realization of complex characters against a background of a larger society, how do you write one when the background is indistinguishable from the foreground?

Fiction, according to Birkerts, "only retains its cultural vitality so long as it can bring readers meaningful news about what it means to live in the world of the present." He has in mind the broad-canvased, big-audience novels of Tolstoy and Dickens, of Bellow and Steinbeck, and, indeed, there seems little doubt that the form is going the way of Shakespearean tragedy and Verdian opera. But the news of its passing is perhaps less meaningful than Birkerts makes it out to be. The audience may have collapsed in the last few decades, but cultural vitality has had to reconcile itself with silence, cunning, and exile throughout our technological century. Kafka told Max Brod he wanted his novels burned, Henry Green and Christina Stead fell into obscurity in their lifetimes, Faulkner and O'Connor hid themselves away in the rural South. The most original and farseeing novelists of our own day—William Gaddis, Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon—not only accept the shadows but actively seek them. "Everything in the culture argues against the novel," DeLillo said in a *Paris Review* interview in 1993. "This is why we need the writer in opposition, the novelist who writes against power, who writes against the corporation or the state or the whole apparatus of assimilation."

The idea of the oppositional writer is a long-established tradition, and its modern variants have been around since at least the First World War, when the Austrian satirist Karl Kraus described himself as the "hopeless contrary" of the nexus of technology, media, and capital. Something that has taken longer to emerge, but is implicit in a work like "The Gutenberg Elegies," is the idea of the oppositional reader. The paradox of literature's élitism is that it's purely self-selecting. Anyone who can read is free to be a part of it. And as the informational élite continues to inoculate itself with literacy a certain percentage of readers will inevitably, like the fabled marijuana smoker, get hooked on harder stuff. Likewise, as the ranks of the preterite swell with the downwardly mobile, restless souls will have ever greater reason to seek out methods of opposition—"to posit an elsewhere," as Birkerts describes reading, "and to set off toward it." The apparent democracy of today's digital networks is an artifact of their infancy. Sooner or later, all social organisms move from anarchy toward hierarchy, and whatever order emerges from the primordial chaos of

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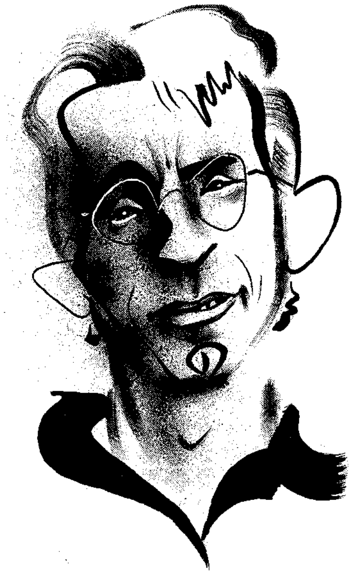
the Net seems as likely to be dystopian as utopian. The possibility of terminal boringness looms particularly large. But even if the digital revolution evolves into a free-market version of the Stalinist totality to which the Bolshevik revolution gave rise, the perverse effect may be the elevation of reading's status. The world of samizdat, and the flowering of a readership that memorized wholesale the poetry of Osip Mandelstam and Anna Akhmatova, ought to remind us that reading can survive, and even flourish, in exile.

Not just Negroponte, who doesn't like to read, but even Birkerts, who thinks that history is ending, underestimates the instability of society and the unruly diversity of its members. The electronic apotheosis of mass culture has merely reconfirmed the élitism of literary reading, which was briefly obscured in the novel's heyday. I mourn the eclipse of the cultural authority that literature once possessed, and I rue the onset of an age so anxious that the pleasure of a text becomes difficult to sustain. I don't suppose that many other people will give away their TVs. I'm not sure I'll last long myself without buying a new one. But the first lesson reading teaches is how to be alone. ♦

# WILD RIDE

*A postmodernist picaresque about fathers and fatherlands.*

BY TOM SHONE



*Peter Carey*

PETER CAREY'S fifth novel, "The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith" (Knopf; $24), his most fantastical yet, comes surrounded with the trappings of fact. A cursory riffle through its four-hundred-odd pages reveals maps of the fictional countries of Efica and Voorstand, a text hung heavy with pseudo-scholarly footnotes, and an appended glossary—all in all, it's about as enticing as receiving a boxed set of Tolkien for Christmas. Carey's title contains a passing nod to Laurence Sterne's "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy," but even that scarcely abates your unease. Sterne's title gave no hint of the wild eccentricities contained within, but Carey's use of "unusual" seems a little forced; he seems to be trying to review his own book before he has written even the first word.

So what's so unusual about Tristan Smith? A botched birth, for starters. Tristram Shandy merely got his nose crushed by forceps, but Tristan Smith emerges completely deformed, a self-proclaimed "mutant." So hospitable to eccentricity is Carey that his fiction has, over the years, come to resemble a vast orphanage of society's outcasts—like Mia Farrow's apartment, only more so—but none of his creations has been stranger than Tristan Smith. Once the gasps of those who peer at the infant Tristan have died away, Carey lets slip the details of his appearance in humane, hushed asides: clubfeet, bluish skin, lipless mouth. His nose is, in fact, about the only thing on him left undamaged, and Carey fans will know why. If the narrator's nose went, so would a good percentage of Carey's descriptive prose, starting with the smell of the theatre in which Felicity Smith is performing as one of Macbeth's witches, and to which she immediately returns from the maternity hospital. Something wicked this way comes, all right: "the air was scented with patchouli oil, dirty laundry, incense, cigarette smoke, musk, and the insidious but persistent odour of a blocked toilet," Tristan notes, sounding less like a newborn infant than like an off-duty wine taster.

Tristan may be a sickly creature, but there's no shortage of men queuing up to play father. There's Vincent, Felicity's sugar daddy and the patron of her theatre group, the Feu Follet Collective; there's Wally, the production manager; and there's Bill, the theatre's hottest young shot. It's a family tree that seems to be growing sidewise at an alarming rate, but Carey's plots have always preferred the lateral leap to the forward march. Despite their density, his books have, at their best, an odd, tangential beauty, an airy poise—Hogarth by way of Chagall. This fondness for the free-floating is one of the reasons Carey likes orphans so much: they give him the perfect opportunity to cut loose from genealogical cause and effect and push his characters into narrative free fall.

"Our history is a history of orphans," Carey wrote of his native Australia in his 1988 novel, "Oscar and Lucinda," an attempt to forge the uncreated conscience of his race, which ended up concluding that, as uncreated consciences go, Australia's was—well, very uncreated. Carey has since resettled in New York, and the move from one ex-colony to another seems to have only sharpened his taste for dispossession. A postmodern picaresque about fathers and fatherlands, "Tristan Smith" cultivates the same restlessly quixotic relationship to both. The first half of the novel takes place in Efica—a former penal colony of the British also exploited by the French—where the young Tristan waits lurking in the Feu Follet, nursing his dreams of becoming an actor. It's a wildly unlikely choice, but then Carey isn't in the habit of distributing believable professions among his characters; what they get instead is obsessive hobbyhorses, saddled up and hot to trot. After his mother's assassination, Tristan's ambition leads him to Voorstand, another ex-colony, one whose global preëminence is based on murderous covert-intelligence operations and the export of trashy entertainments starring a character called Bruder Mouse. "Tristan Smith" can at times seem like a recovery kit for Carey's cultural jet lag, and he dips liberally into the smooth balm of the obvious. So Carey smells a rat about the mouse—who doesn't?

THERE is, you may gather, a lot of plot in this novel. It may be called "The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith," but it's a close-run thing: no character is too minor to qualify for a fun-packed C.V. of arson or espionage, or a quick three-generation genealogy. Carey's fund of stories seems so inexhaustible that he should seriously think of making charitable donations to the needy—dirty realists, minimalists, hopeless Carverites, William Burroughs. Until that day comes, however, his reviewers will continue to be trapped in a state of Shandean paralysis: now, either I explain the subplot involving the nurse who turns out to be a transvestite spy, or I knuckle down to the task of describing that bestial seduction. Carey seems determined to push Aristotelian theory to its limits; in this novel, character isn't so much defined by action as desperate to get in on it, and frequently ends up trailing behind in long descriptive lists, like so much ticker tape. When Vincent tightens his belt, the gesture is "worldly, confident, sexual"; when Wally strides across a stage the curve of his back suggests "excitement, furtiveness, urgency, secrecy"; even a woman blowing her nose does so "wetly, unattractively, deliberately."

The woman who is blowing her nose with such distinctive insouciance—a gold-digging blonde named Roxanna—is actually one of the high points of the book: a foxy slice of caricature, she waltzes into the novel and walks off with much of it. Unfortunately, halfway through, Carey finds himself short of a baddie, and she gets press-ganged into the job. It's nothing personal—she just happened to be standing nearby at the time—and, anyway, the role is soon passed on to somebody else. This pass-the-parcel plotting can be wildly unconvincing, like the hasty elaborations of a cornered liar. Carey's novels cry out for someone to assist him with all this scheming, but, for a writer who is so frequently compared to Dickens, Carey is hopeless at rogues. The reason for this, however—his need to fall head over heels for each and every one of his characters—is one of his greatest strengths as a novelist, and what makes him such a natural champion of underdogs like Tristan. Peter Carey: The Writer Who Loved Too Much. As faults go, there are worse. ♦

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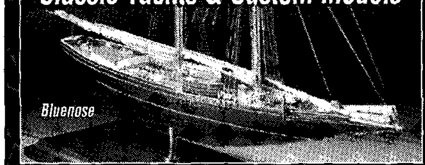

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# RECOMMENDED READING

### Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life

by Lyndall Gordon

(Norton; $27.50)

Charlotte Brontë's first biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, wrote that her subject had "gone through suffering enough to have taken out every spark of merriment." Thackeray described her as emitting sparks, of another sort: "There's a fire and fury raging in that little woman." These images of extinction and flame blur the metaphor that dominated Brontë's own imagination—shadow—and this metaphor pervades Gordon's arresting portrait of a life conducted in the interstices between obscurity and fame. Gordon's insights into the correspondence and the fiction uncover a more complex Brontë than we have ever met: a woman whose asperity matched her piety, and whose shyness equalled her daring.

### Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850-1920

by David E. Shi

(Oxford; $35)

"The true poem is the daily paper," Walt Whitman wrote in 1852. Shi's brisk and, at times, dizzying survey of the arts focusses on the American taste for realism, of which Whitman was just one apostle. Yet, as the reader discovers, the appeal of artistic realism in this country has always been compromised by a certain prudish, idealistic, and deeply American distaste for reality itself.

### Borderliners

by Peter Høeg; translated from the Danish by Barbara Haveland

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22)

Høeg's terse style is immediately familiar to readers of his compelling earlier novel, "Smilla's Sense of Snow," as is his concern with great abstractions—in this case, the nature of time. Within the looming philosophical framework is the story, as tense as a spy thriller, of three traumatized boarding-school students who believe they are onto a sinister administrative plot to use time and regimentation against them. The narrator, Peter, is eventually rescued, through adoption by a couple named Høeg.

### Original Sin

by P. D. James

(Knopf; $24)

Innocent House, a nineteenth-century pile on the Thames that accommodates the Peverell Press, presides over this novel of revenge. After Gerard Etienne, the new chairman of the press, announces his plan to sell the house, he ends up dead, with the head of a toy snake stuffed in his mouth. In this elaborate novel, the author, now Baroness James of Holland Park, does what she does best: shows that guilt and blame have no single address.

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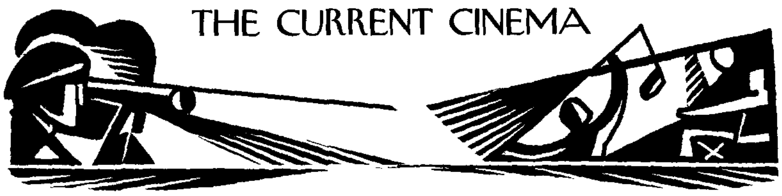


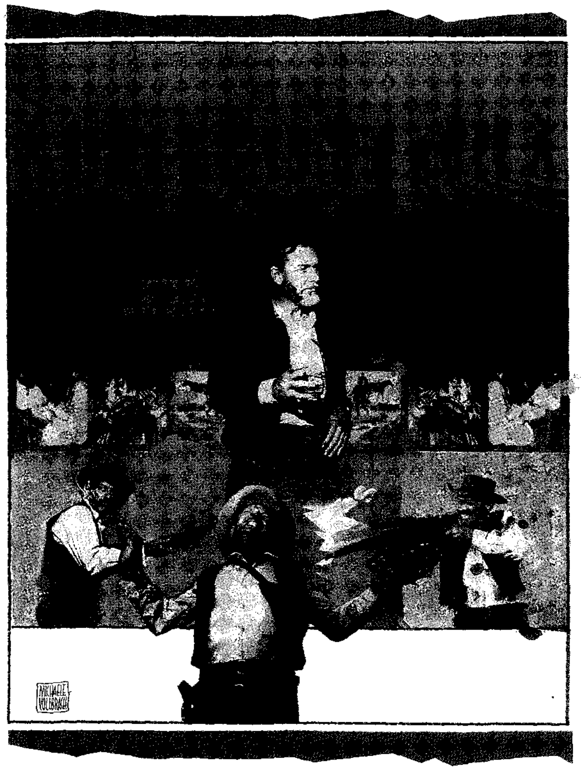
# ARTIST OF DEATH

*A great American movie as it was meant to be seen.*

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

When Sam Peckinpah's Western epic "The Wild Bunch" was released, in the summer of 1969, every discussion of the picture seemed to begin and end with the question of violence. The movie opens with an action sequence in which the outlaw heroes rob a bank in a sleepy Texas town and are ambushed by bounty hunters the railroad has hired; the shootout is long, loud, and chaotic, and most of the victims, raising little puffs of dust as they drop, are townsfolk caught in the crossfire. In the movie's climax, two hours later, another town, on the other side of the border, gets shot up by the surviving members of the Bunch, and this scene surpasses the held-breath horror of the opening set piece in every way: more noise, more bodies, and a more profound sense of rage, waste, and murderous exhilaration.

Although the bank-robbery sequence treats violent death with a furious sensual immediacy, the scene remains, tenuously, within the boundaries of Western-movie conventions: bullets rip heedlessly into the respectable suits and frocks of the townspeople, but at least we understand why the bullets are flying in the first place—the idea of bandits shooting their way out of a trap isn't tough to grasp. In the climactic massacre, however, the violence lacks even the justification of survival. The four members of the gang are up against a large detachment of Mexican troops and have no hope of escape; they seem to be killing for the sake of killing, for the joy of annihilation. The carnage, rendered both at normal speed and in slow motion, is edited to a disturbingly voluptuous rhythm, and conveys an apocalyptic feeling of release. Its senselessness is pure, absolute. The climax of "The Wild Bunch" takes us into a strange, dark territory that we know and we don't know, like a place in a dream: wherever we are, we've left every border behind.



*Sam Peckinpah: a slow rise to the artistic peak of "The Wild Bunch" and then an agonizing fall.*

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

"The Wild Bunch" came out at a time when violence was on everybody's mind, and it was inevitable, perhaps, that viewers' reactions consisted mostly of either attacking or defending Peckinpah's approach to bloodshed. Those who hated the picture condemned it as disgusting, excessive, exploitative; its champions protested that Peckinpah was commenting on the atrocities that dominated the news in the late sixties. This week, Warner Bros. is re-releasing "The Wild Bunch," in a version that most American audiences have never seen—the two-hour-and-twenty-five-minute cut that the director approved for distribution in Europe. For the American release, Peckinpah had reluctantly cut two minutes; and shortly after the United States première the film's producer—without Peckinpah's approval—cut eight more minutes, which left the bloody action sequences intact but eliminated scenes that shed light on the characters' motivations. The graphic depiction of violence, which stunned viewers twenty-five years ago, is routine now. Yet "The Wild Bunch" is still shocking, even though we can no longer say that we've never seen anything like it; and it's still resonant, even without the echoes of Vietnam and simmering domestic revolt.

The restored "Wild Bunch" is different from the movie I saw in 1969, just after the producer's cuts went into effect: different on the screen and also in the mind's eye. As an adolescent, I was thrilled by the picture's audacity, its outlaw bravado, and the sheer kinetic force of its imagery, but what has drawn me back to it, over and over, is my suspicion that its meanings would deepen with experience and the passage of time. Something about the way the leader of the Bunch, Pike Bishop (William Holden), carries himself expresses a terrible, irrevocable knowledge of what life can do to people. Every time I've seen the picture since 1969, Pike has seemed a little larger, has separated himself a little more from the colorful characters surrounding him. The restored scenes make it clear that "The Wild Bunch" was always Pike's story, and that the movie's emotional impact depends on our ability to understand an aging killer's melancholy.

The most damaging cuts from the full version of the film are three flashbacks, all of which represent Pike's memories. The elimination of these brief scenes streamlined what was already a fairly uncomplicated story. The screenplay, by Peckinpah and Walon Green, is set just before the start of the First World War. Pike's gang—a motley assortment of fiery young men and cynical old-timers—is being pursued by a posse whose leader, Deke Thornton (Robert Ryan), was once Pike's partner in crime. Thornton has no choice: he'll be sent back to prison if he doesn't bring his old friend in. The first flashback adds a layer of tragic irony to the pursuit: it reveals that Thornton's imprisonment was a direct consequence of Pike's carelessness. As Pike leads the Bunch out of Texas and into Mexico, he's haunted by memories of other failures: of deliberately leaving a young subordinate to die and later discovering that the boy was the grandson of another gang member; and of visiting his married lover at the wrong time, and getting himself shot and her killed by her angry husband. These scenes help explain the disappointment and defeat that, in the shorter version, we sensed in the ruined topography of Holden's face, the hint of weariness in his erect, confident bearing, and the flickers of sorrow that momentarily turned his hard squint into something more like a wince. And Pike's memories heighten our awareness of his isolation from the others, the solitude enforced by his own calamitous mistakes.

This isn't to say that the restoration of "The Wild Bunch" turns the movie into a psychological drama. It is, as it always was, a brilliant, suspenseful Western; what the fresh insights into Pike's consciousness do is to raise the stakes o a game that is already unbearably tense In the canyons and deserts of Mexico Pike feels the pressure of the past closing in on him, of debts coming due; in the tradition of tired, hunted badmen he looks for deliverance in a last big score, and agrees to rob a munitions train for an unscrupulous general named Mapache (Emilio Fernandez). The robbery is an extraordinary piece of Western filmmaking, which begins with a furtive, silent takeover of the locomotive and ends with an astonishing scene of a bridge blowing up under Thornton's posse. But, from that point on, everything the gang does is compromised by impulses that seem to have more to do with Pike's moral desperation than with the simple imperative to take the money and run. By the climax, Pike has maneuvered himself and his comrades into a spot where the only way out is a kind o ecstatic self-immolation. They walk to their faceoff with Mapache down a narrow, crowded street, and that walk i

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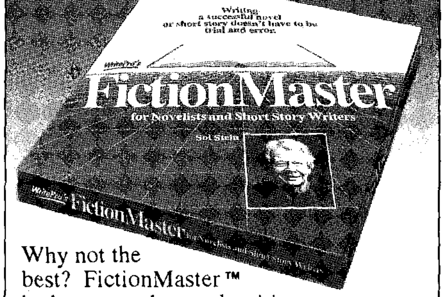
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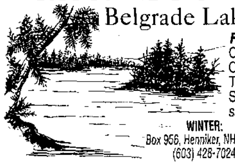

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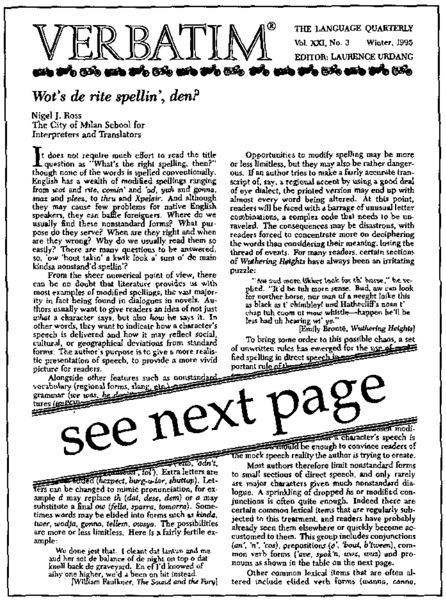
perhaps the greatest single scene in the long history of Westerns, because it's charged with both heroism and viciousness, with both exultation and despair, and it seems to resolve all the dense ambiguities of the Western experience in a moment of noble insanity: they walk as if they had found a straight line through the crooked world.

And after that there's the endless-seeming mayhem, and then a few minutes of eerie repose; buzzards and human scavengers pick at the remains, and Deke Thornton sits outside the gates of the town and stares into the empty distance. He looks hollowed out, deader than Pike; then, unexpectedly, someone comes along and gives him a reason to move again—a feeble one, but enough to get him going. Part of the beauty of "The Wild Bunch" is Peckinpah's unshakable belief in the value of movement. It's what Westerns are about: the instant when a character, in a desperate situation, says, "Let's go." By the end, when Pike utters that command for the last time, the words seem to contain everything we need to know about his battered spirit. And, as he sprays machine-gun fire through the plaza of the Mexican town, he looks like a man fulfilled: a Western survivor who becomes, in the final minutes of his life, an artist of death. In the restored version of "The Wild Bunch," the superbly choreographed massacre doesn't even feel like the true climax. The shock that Peckinpah has been preparing us for is the moment before the killing starts, when, with chilling serenity, a middle-aged man resolves to go to hell and take a few people with him.

THE new print of "The Wild Bunch" gives audiences around the country the chance to see a great American movie as it was meant to be seen. In New York, the film will also be screened on the closing night (March 31st) of a three-week Peckinpah retrospective at the Walter Reade Theatre, in Lincoln Center. The series includes all fourteen of Peckinpah's features and a generous selection of the work he did for television in the fifties and sixties. The story this career tells is, in its rough outlines, tragic—a slow rise to the artistic peak of "The Wild Bunch" and then an agonizing fall. The movies he made between 1969 and his death, in 1984, are a frustrating mixture of cynical professionalism and flashes of inspiration. The most ambitious of them, "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (1973), was butchered by the studio that released it, but, even in the "director's cut" showing at Lincoln Center, the picture isn't quite the end-of-the-line masterpiece that Peckinpah was aiming for. With its mournful rhythms restored, the movie makes better sense, but it remains a beautiful, ghostly abstraction. You read Peckinpah's later work the way you scan Pike Bishop's ravaged face, looking for traces of the vitality that keeps him going past the point of exhaustion.

The Peckinpah of the seventies and the early eighties is like someone who has been left behind—Thornton at the gate, slumped and spent. Peckinpah could still rouse himself for an action sequence, an opportunity to represent the savage grace of movement: the martial-arts battles in "The Killer Elite" (1975) are as elegant and as mysterious as any fight scenes ever filmed. But the best movies of his declining years are two comedies—"The Ballad of Cable Hogue" (1970) and "Junior Bonner" (1972). Those pictures seem to revive the spirit of Peckinpah's early work in the 1960 TV series "The Westerner" and in his 1962 classic "Ride the High Country." The retrospective includes the pilot and all thirteen half-hour episodes of "The Westerner," which Peckinpah created and supervised; he directed five of the episodes himself. The series, taken as a whole, is a kind of picaresque, in which an aimless, illiterate cowboy named Dave Blassingame (Brian Keith) roams the West with his dog. Although the series isn't consistently good, it adds up to a compelling portrait of the emotional rigors of frontier existence; it's driven by a bottomless curiosity about human weakness and failure, and you realize that that's what always interested Peckinpah about the characters of the West. In "The Westerner" and "Ride the High Country" he looks at the foibles of gunmen and con men and prostitutes and religious fanatics with a tolerant eye—a perspective that reasserts itself only fitfully in the years after "The Wild Bunch." But it's always there somewhere, mingled with the rage and the blood and the bitterness. If you look at Peckinpah whole, you can see where he came from and where he ended up. "The Wild Bunch" tells you why. ♦



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THE LANGUAGE QUARTERLY
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EDITOR: LAURENCE URDANG

*Wot's de rite spellin', den?*

Nigel J. Ross
The City of Milan School for
Interpreters and Translators

It does not require much effort to read the title question as "What's the right spelling, then?" though none of the words is spelled conventionally. English has a wealth of modified spellings ranging from *wot* and *rite*, *comin'* and *'ad*, *yuh* and *gonna*, *snax* and *pleez*, to *thru* and *Xpelair*. And although they may cause few problems for native English speakers, they can baffle foreigners. Where do we usually find these nonstandard forms? What purpose do they serve? When are they right and when are they wrong? Why do we usually read them so easily? There are many questions to be answered, so, 'ow 'bout takin' a kwik look a' sum o' de main kindsa nonstand'd spellin'?

From the sheer numerical point of view, there can be no doubt that literature provides us with most examples of modified spellings, the vast majority in fact being found in dialogues in novels. Authors usually want to give readers an idea of not just *what* a character says, but also *how* he says it. In other words, they want to indicate how a character's speech is delivered and how it may reflect social, cultural, or geographical deviations from standard forms. The author's purpose is to give a more realistic presentation of speech, to provide a more vivid picture for readers.

Alongside other features such as nonstandard vocabulary (regional forms, slang, etc.)
grammar (*we was, he do*
tures (*imPO*

see next page

(*ello, 'adn't,*
*tol'*). Extra letters are
added (*hexpect, burg-u-lar, shuttup*). Letters can be changed to mimic pronunciation, for example *d* may replace *th* (*dat, dese, dem*) or *a* may substitute a final *ow* (*fella, sparra, tomorra*). Sometimes words may be elided into forms such as *kinda, twer, wodja, gonna, tellem, owsya*. The possibilities are more or less limitless. Here is a fairly fertile example:

> We done jest that. I cleant dat lantun and me and her sot de balance of de night on top o dat knoll back de graveyard. En ef I'd knowed of aihy one higher, we'd a been on hit instead.
> [William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*]

Opportunities to modify spelling may be more or less limitless, but they may also be rather dangerous. If an author tries to make a fairly accurate transcript of, say, a regional accent by using a good deal of eye dialect, the printed version may end up with almost every word being altered. At this point, readers will be faced with a barrage of unusual letter combinations, a complex code that needs to be unraveled. The consequences may be disastrous, with readers forced to concentrate more on deciphering the words than considering their meaning, losing the thread of events. For many readers, certain sections of *Wuthering Heights* have always been an irritating puzzle:

> "Aw sud more likker look for th' horse," he replied. "It'd be tuh more sense. Bud, aw can look for norther horse, nur man uf a neeght loike this as black as t' chimbley! und Hathecliff's noan t' chap tuh coom ut mow whistle—happen he'll be less bad uh hearing wi' ye."
> [Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*]

To bring some order to this possible chaos, a set of unwritten rules has emerged for the use of modi-
fied spelling in direct speech in
portant rule of th

modi-
a character's speech is
should be enough to convince readers of the mock speech reality the author is trying to create.

Most authors therefore limit nonstandard forms to small sections of direct speech, and only rarely are major characters given much nonstandard dialogue. A sprinkling of dropped *h*s or modified conjunctions is often quite enough. Indeed there are certain common lexical items that are regularly subjected to this treatment, and readers have probably already seen them elsewhere or quickly become accustomed to them. This group includes conjunctions (*an', 'n', 'cos*), prepositions (*o', 'bout, b'tween*), common verb forms (*'ave, spok'n, woz, wuz*) and pronouns as shown in the table on the next page.

Other common lexical items that are often altered include elided verb forms (*wanna, canna,*

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## THE THEATRE

# DANCING IN THE DARK

*Mayo Simon's "The Old Lady's Guide to Survival."*

BY JOHN LAHR

*June Havoc and Shirl Bernheim as improbable friends: "What happens when you need a drop of help?"*

IN my office is a film poster of June Havoc hitch-kicking a tapered leg over the head of my father, Bert Lahr, in an R.K.O. movie called "Sing Your Worries Away," which, from the look of Dad's nearly full head of hair, dates back to the early forties. At eighty-one, with seventy-nine years of experience on the stage, Ms. Havoc is once again putting her high spirits and her still startling good looks before the paying customers, in Mayo Simon's touching and shrewdly observed play "The Old Lady's Guide to Survival." It seems fitting that the play should be at the bijou, oak-panelled Lamb's Theatre, on Forty-fourth Street, which, back when the Lamb's Club catered mostly to old vaudevillians, was the place where the old-timers showed off their skills once a year in the "Lamb's Gambol." Ms. Havoc is no longer singing and dancing the economic woes of the nation away; here, with a brave show of independence, she is facing down another kind of depression—the isolation, the invisibility, the decrepitude of old age.

Her character is based on the playwright's mother, Laura, who was eighty-five when Simon started writing the play, and who is now eighty-nine and almost blind. "My mother says, 'All I have to work with is my own two hands.' She lives by herself in San Diego, and she still does everything herself," Simon told me. "She's *not alone*—there are maybe hundreds of thousands of people in their eighties, and even their nineties, who never see a social worker, who never look inside an old-age home, who are totally at the center of their own lives."

Havoc plays Netty, whose first words delivered to the oncoming traffic as she tries to cross to the bus stop, are "All right, all right, have a heart! Give me a chance!" And Simon, unlike the drivers does just that. He is all heart. In the first, emblematic moment at the bus stop, against the blue sky and the palm trees of Douglas Schmidt’s handsome set, Netty sits on a bench beside a big wire wastebasket brimming with trash. She is an extension of the city’s detritus—part of the waste of daily life. Simon’s goal is to explore the courage behind an old person’s will to live—the little miracles of friendship and pleasure and wonder that are intensified by the imminence of an ending. The pluckiness of his characters lends itself to comedy, but their leftover lives are inevitably poignant. The play tries—and succeeds well enough, under Alan Mandell’s direction—to steer an honorable course between the extremes of laughter and mawkishness.

“The Old Lady’s Guide to Survival” appears fifteen years almost to the day after Simon’s hilarious two-character “These Men” débuted off Broadway. It went on to get both a better production and better reviews in England. “These Men” was about a kind of female “Odd Couple”—one rapacious and one naïve—and their hunt for men: a quest in which they find more in each other than they do in the opposite sex. “The Old Lady’s Guide to Survival” is really an extension of that play fifty years on, only now there are no men to bring the two women together or to tear them apart. “I don’t have time to think about men,” says Netty, who has been a widow for five years. She is middle class and energetic, and has come to enjoy the domain of solitude she inhabits; she doesn’t want to be cumbered with the cares of Shprintzy (the droll Shirl Bernheim), a lower-class and ill-educated Jewish ditz who tries to befriend her. “When we get to a certain age,” Netty says, “we learn to be just a little detached from the suffering of others.” Shprintzy’s almost childish intrusiveness is unwelcome. Netty invokes her dead husband’s maxim about friends: “Better keep to yourself, you’ll come out ahead.” But she adds, “What happens when you need a drop of help?” On that conundrum Simon hangs his tale. “There’s both the chance and the danger of friendship,” he said of the dilemma of intimacy in old age. “The chance is that you’ll find something with another person that’s more meaningful than a symphony or a class or a book.”

To Netty, Shprintzy holds out only the promise of a guffaw. “She’s so stupid and confused she never knows where she is,” Netty confides to us. Recently widowed and already on the lookout for a man, Shprintzy is a manic chatterbox who speaks with a transparent Yiddish inflection that makes her seem like the embodiment of a Henny Youngman joke. She clings to anybody who has a friendly smile for her—she’s a kind of human kudzu. A mere request for directions, and Shprintzy offers to go with Netty to her appointment. “I got nothing to do,” she says. Marianna Elliott’s understated, witty costumes make the point about the two women’s differences in character and in class. Shprintzy is definitely Netty’s inferior in all departments except, perhaps, humility. Netty pads onstage in a demure purple suit with a circle pin, and sensible suède shoes. Shprintzy, on the other hand, is the epitome of vulgarity—girlish pink and yellow bows in her hair, a Sea World bag in her hand, a rainbow-colored visor over her eyes. To the audience the costume’s color says comedy, to Netty it merely says clown. But Netty needs a little help getting the right bus, and so a conversation begins. The dramaturgical shorthand with which Simon conveys the contrasts in character is crude—we are told, not shown—but the need for companionship grows enormous when Netty’s life changes in the ten seconds it takes the doctor to tell her over the phone that she’s going blind.

Still, Netty struggles vainly to get rid of her dippy doppelgänger. Even when catastrophe strikes Shprintzy (the daughter with whom she lives commits suicide), Netty doesn’t want to take her in. “I can’t help her,” she thinks out loud. “I can’t let myself be dragged down.” But Shprintzy will not be denied. She becomes Netty’s improbable friend: she can’t play bridge, she hates opera, she has no conversation, it seems, except about men and dancing. She hovers. But she is generous. “Together,” she says to Netty, writing checks for her when Netty can longer see to write, “we make a whole person.” For all its obviousness, the scene is compelling, and so is the play. Old age, like adolescence, is a secret grief that society hides away from itself, and the mere discussion of it touches a vast, generally unexplored well of feeling. In giving each other help, Netty and Shprintzy also give their lives meaning. Netty tries to teach Shprintzy to assert herself and gets the best laugh of the evening in the process. “After my husband died, I had to return a defective clock to a store, and they wouldn’t give me back my money,” Netty says. “So I said, ‘Well, my husband will come in tomorrow and *he* will talk to you.’ And you know what? *They gave me back my money.* I went home and I wept bitter tears. Because I realized that my husband dead had more power than me alive.” After that, she says, she never mentioned him again. As Netty boosts Shprintzy’s confidence (“You are not invisible. You are an important and valuable person”), Shprintzy, in turn, gives Netty a sense of fun. They exit from this scene humming “Brazil,” and the respectable Netty gives a little flourish with her creaky leg as she waddles off.

The punishments of old age appear as suddenly as the hard-won pleasures. One day, Shprintzy is being playful in the park; the next day—any day—she is lost and confused and caterwauling like a baby, demanding hamburger, not fruit, for a snack. Shprintzy is suddenly demented, and Netty’s nightmare comes to pass. She is faced with a new burden and a new loss, but also with an awareness of a real attachment. The play’s last scene nicely unites these polarities. Shprintzy is before us in the shapeless cotton print dress of an old-age home, and she walks not with a cane but with a walker. Netty comes to visit her; and, as they sit on a bench, only Netty speaks. Her friend stays mostly motionless and stares blankly into space. Anyone with elderly parents knows this stare: the eye turns inward, looking at a memory that language can no longer recall or convey. Shprintzy’s isolation is a vastness around her. Without memory, there is no sense of self. Still, for the two women on the bench, in that awful half-life of disintegration, there is connection. Simon and Mandell make the point powerfully. Netty hums “Brazil” and moves Shprintzy’s immobile arms in the air to its rhythm. Then, slowly, Shprintzy’s arms begin to move by themselves. Netty’s and Shprintzy’s hands play between each other as the lights fade. They’re dancing in the dark. ◆

# SHOUTS & MURMURS

## HEIDI CHRONICLED

BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN

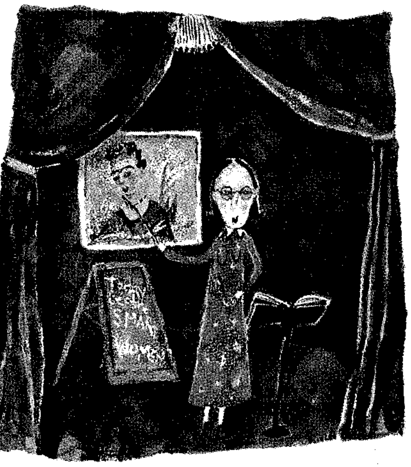
DURING my years in the mid-sixties at the Calhoun School, in New York, the greatest hits of female preparatory-school drama departments were largely of the convent and weeping-widow genre: "Cradle Song" and Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba." Also popular were the abbreviated "Trojan Women" and the mini "Lysistrata." At Calhoun, during the "Gaudeamus Igitur" curtain call of the annual Latin-class Saturnalia show, the Velcro hooks on our Fieldcrest twin-sheet togas came unfastened, proving for all the parent body the true value of a classical education: "*Nulla res melior spectaculo est*"—or, very roughly, there's no business like show business.

In the late nineteen-sixties, when junior-year women were admitted to the male bastions of ivy, the walls of single-sex education came tumbling down. Amherst College, for instance, experimented with the very balanced ratio of twenty-three in-house females, of which I made up a twenty-third, to a thousand two hundred males. Rather than in convent plays, I was suddenly appearing nightly in leather as Beryl the Dominatrix in a dormitory-basement production of Terrence McNally's one-act, "Noon." For my senior year, I returned to Mount Holyoke and the comfort of an all-female audience.

TWENTY-FIVE years later, and a month after Jamie Lee Curtis wrapped her film portrayal as Heidi Holland in my play "The Heidi Chronicles," Anna Cash made her ninth-grade début in the Brearley School all-female production. The entire Upper School was present for the performance. Sitting in the balcony were the proud parents, mostly in their forties and looking suspiciously like academics, doctors, and assorted serious good people. Indeed, Anna Cash's mother is the novelist Mary Gordon.

If "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is about a man who shot a bird, "The Heidi Chronicles" is about a feminist art historian who gets sad. The play follows the life of Heidi—not the goat girl or the Beverly Hills matchmaker—from a Miss Crain's school dance in 1965 to her choice to adopt a baby alone in 1989. In the Brearley interpretation, Anna Cash appeared and began the play's opening monologue—an art-history lecture about ignored women artists—in front of a slide painting by Sofonisba Anguissola (circa 1559). The Upper School at Brearley is apparently big on irony: Ms. Cash got a house laugh on "This portrait can be perceived as a meditation on the brevity of youth, beauty, and light—but what can't?" On Broadway, the line often didn't get even an educated smirk.

The girls giggled through the Miss Crain's dance scene. Tenley Laserson was very hip as Chip Boxer, the cool boy in Weejuns and a tweed jacket, still a familiar type at first-rate female prep schools. When Rachel Grand as Scoop Rosenbaum asked Heidi to go to bed with him, in the 1968 Eugene McCarthy mixer scene, I noted the first bit of revisionism. In "The Heidi Chronicles" for grownups, Scoop says he can't promise Heidi "equal orgasms." At Brearley, Scoop couldn't promise Heidi an "equal relationship." The most interesting bit of nineties invention came in the women's-rap-group scene. Fran, a physicist, was described in an Ann Arbor women's-consciousness-raising rap group in 1970 as an "open" lesbian. In my original text, she is merely a lesbian. Clearly, the Brearley ninth grade has had discussions on open and closed sexual preference. Anna Cash, like Jamie Lee Curtis, ended the rap-group scene singing and dancing to Aretha Franklin's "Respect" as the women celebrated feminism and all that it promised fo their future. When, after the performance, I asked the cast if the play seemed pertinent to them, Rebecca Mancuso, who played Fran, smiled through her braces. "The women's-movement stuff was the most fun," she said. "We all loved that."



I REMEMBER returning to Mount Holyoke on Sunday nights in the late sixties after a weekend in New Haven or Hanover. (You never revealed the name of the college you were dating if you had any savvy.) Finally, the stress of a weekend away pretending not to be who we really were was over, and we'd sit for hours in flannel shirts and jeans, smart women just talking. As I left the Brearley School a few weeks ago, I passed through the lunchroom, and there was a new generation of smart women talking about life, men, Heidegger, and "The Heidi Chronicles." "*Nulla res melior feminae re*"—or, very roughly, there's no business like women's business. ◆

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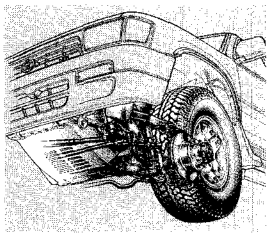

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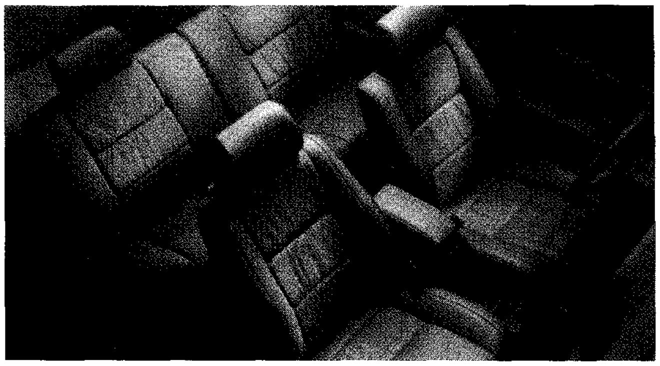

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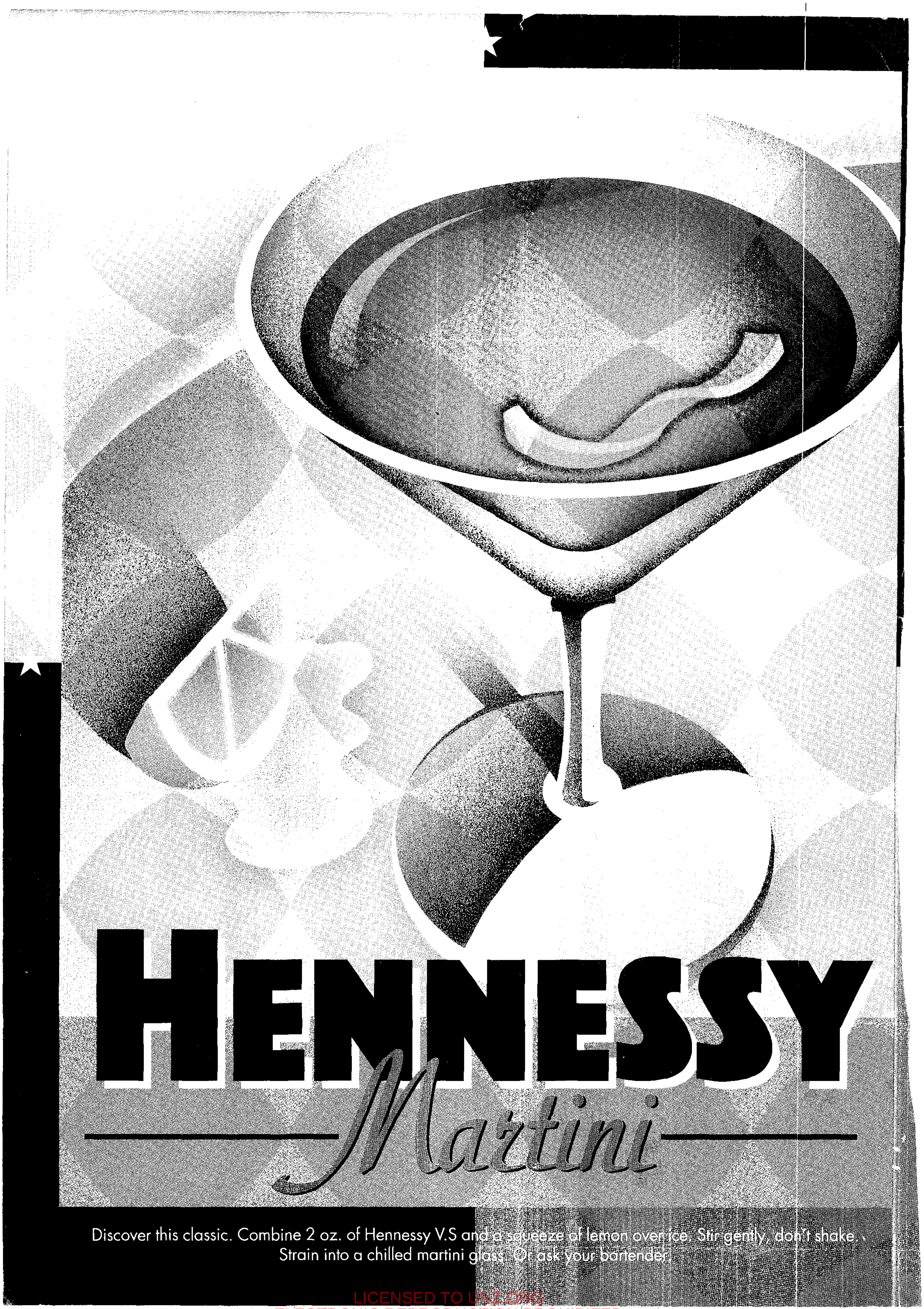
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